The Many Lives of Glenn T. Rieke

a biography

by
Lee P. Sauer

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During Glenn T. Rieke's first seven years of life, his family lost everything. The dry, forbidding ground of a Montana homestead took their hope, their money and their third born son. When his father sold an heirloom pocket watch in a Chicago pawn shop, the Riekes had run out of options.

Ironically, less than 24 hours later, the family began an upward climb that – except for temporary setbacks – continued throughout the rest of Glenn's long life.

This is a rags-to-riches story, a hard work-makes-good story, an American success story. It is mainly Glenn's biography, but his life can't be explained without introducing his inventive family and the company that bears their name.

For many folks who grew up in Auburn, Indiana, Glenn was known simply as "Mr. Rieke." In the end, this book is an explanation of how he earned that title and their respect.

All proceeds from sales of this book will be donated to the Rieke Park project.

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Many Lives
of
Glenn T. Rieke

a biography

by
Lee P. Sauer

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I dedicate this book to my lovely wife of 65 years, Thelma Layden Rieke. Her taste and good judgment have guided me through many projects, including this one. She can be a severe critic without neglecting to be a supportive help-mate and loving wife and mother. She taught me the real meaning of love.

Glenn T. Rieke
April 22, 2000

INTRODUCTION

On Dec. 1, 1918, 7-year-old Glenn Rieke stood with his father on a Chicago street corner to witness the dawn of a new era.

Father and son gaped in amazement as horse-drawn vehicles sidled to an orchestrated stop alongside their brand-new, gas-powered cousins. Then everyone—the wagons, the automobiles, the crowd assembled on the sidewalk—watched tiny glowing filaments seen through tinted glass. When Chicago's first electric street light changed from red to green, the clatter and clunk of the mixed-era traffic continued on its way. Members of the crowd gave varied expressions to a singular refrain:

Amazing!

At that street corner, at that moment in time, the father and son were caught in a tidal wave of change. In six weeks since leaving their Montana homestead, they had bounced over dirt prairie roads in a Model T Ford, dodged the infamous Asian influenza epidemic, and witnessed frenetic celebrations over the end of what was known as *the* World War, for there had been only one.

In short order the Model T was wrecked and sold. The money it brought bought five train tickets to Chicago.

Unfortunately, there were six Riekes, so Glenn's older brother, Irvin, then 17, stayed in Minneapolis with a car-washing job and this instruction from his father: when you earn enough money for a ticket, meet us in Chicago. The farewell instruction included no street address to knock at, no landmark to look for, no telephone number to dial. Even in those simpler times, the goodbye scene played to a tune of hopeless, ridiculous chance.

"Meet us in Chicago."

Then six weeks later, Glenn and his father stood at the Windy City corner. While watching the magical light, Glenn glanced across the street and noticed a figure crossing diagonally towards them.

"Dad, there's Irvin!" he said.

Shaken by the pure chance of their reunion, his father answered, "Well, I'll be god-damned!"

Eight decades later, sitting at a desk he's worked at for more than half a century and leaning back in its creaky chair, the little boy who has since grown old shook his head. "There are so many things that happen in a man's life," Glenn said. "At the time, you thought they weren't important. But as years go on, you wish you'd kept a diary."

That's where this book comes in.

Through a series of interview sessions conducted in the last half of 1998 and the beginning of 1999, Glenn T. Rieke recorded his memories. This book, in a sense, is his diary.

Glenn, above, as he appeared at the height of his career.

Of course, there's the story of the Rieke Corporation, the ever-expanding industrial complex on Auburn's west side which Glenn's father–TW Rieke—started in a small Chicago tool shop.

But there's so much more.

Besides TW and Irvin, there's important people, such as Glenn's younger brother Mahlon, his brother-in-law Jerry Kelly, and his cousin Leonard Rathert. There's two Auburn legends in their own right, Wild Bill Fitzsimmons and B.O. Fink. There's Glenn's mother, Mary, his wife, Thelma, his sister, Ruth, and his sons, Layden and Eric.

There's stories of adventure, such as the unearthed murder victim's shoes, the horse that fell off the mountain ledge and the car that just barely did not. There's wonders of innovation, such as turning a student-built automobile into a glider slingshot and turning a small boy's medical mishap into a multi-million-dollar device.

There's wonders of perseverance, such as building a swimming pool with hand tools and backpacking moose meat out of a marsh. There's magic moments when everything falls in place, such as overseeing construction of DeKalb Memorial Hospital and hitting a hole-in-one. There's tears of tragedy, such as those shed for two toddler brothers who lost their lives to accident and illness. There's tears of laughter, such as those shed in the retelling of the horse with money in his belly and the outhouse with a voice in its bowels.

Plus, behind Glenn's personal tales is the dynamic curtain of world history. When Glenn was growing up, his father used horses to till the ground. To make changes in this book, Glenn communicated via e-mail. "There isn't any question," he concluded, "I've lived in the most exciting age of man!"

Finally, woven throughout this historic tale is the thread of fate. The chances that this book might have ended differently are great. If the Montana drought years hadn't been quite so severe, or if strip farming technology had come along sooner, the family might not have left the homestead. If TW hadn't received the inspiration of invention, or if Irvin hadn't gotten that first big order, the family business might have died a-borning. If the Auburn Commercial Club hadn't recognized its potential or if an early sale had been successful, the company might never have moved to Indiana. If any number of Glenn's aviation or hunting adventures had taken a deadly turn, he might not have survived to tell his tale.

True, Glenn hedged his bets with long, hard work. And, by pulling the one-armed bandit of opportunity so many times, he increased the likelihood that at least some gambits would meet with success.

Yet, as Irvin's lucky stumble toward that Chicago corner illustrated, each cast of the dice seemed, ultimately, to fall in Glenn's favor. There's a certain predestination to his story and the spirit in which he tells it. As if—in spite of the struggles—he assumed all along it would turn out as it has.

For the reader, knowing ahead of time that this book ends happily adds to its appeal. Looking back on a long life can be sobering. Looking back on a long life studded with life-threatening adventures, world-class successes, gambles that paid dividends, hard work and hard play—all set against the vibrant backdrop of America's technological and societal sea change of the 1900s—can be downright intoxicating.

And, as if his story isn't enough, Glenn stressed that this "diary" share the glory. As a result, in many vignettes he takes part as an observer only. In other instances where his head appears above the crowd, Glenn points out that he's standing on someone else's shoulders.

The text that follows attempts to pull all the divergent themes together. To acknowledge its colorful backdrop, the story paints general history in broad strokes. To fulfill it's purpose, it shows Rieke family history in detail. To give the story unity, Glenn remains the lead

A presidential perspective

Through the writing of this book, Glenn T. Rieke had lived during the terms of 16 U.S. Presidents. They are:

William H. Taft
Woodrow Wilson
Warren G. Harding
Calvin Coolidge
Herbert Hoover
Franklin D. Roosevelt
Harry S. Truman
Dwight D. Eisenhower
John F. Kennedy
Lyndon B. Johnson
Richard M. Nixon
Gerald R. Ford
Jimmy Carter
Ronald Reagan
George Bush
Bill Clinton

actor throughout, yet a host of other characters move in and out to prove his extraordinary life did not develop in a vacuum.

Hopefully the book succeeds on several levels. Yet, it's a small matter if it doesn't. Stripped of all ornaments, individual incidents that make up the text are fascinating in their own right.

In other words, you can't miss with good material.

Lee P. Sauer
February 20, 2000

Editor's note: Several people helped gather material for this book. Glenn wished to give special thanks to two: his wife and "secretary" Thelma, and his Montana cousin, Mildred Hoge.

SETTING THE STAGE

Chapter One

Chicago.

Carl Sandburg called it "City of the Big Shoulders." *Stormy, husky, brawling ... Laughing even as an ignorant fighter laughs who has never lost a battle ...*

Theodore William Rieke arrived in the railroad and meat-packing metropolis right around the turn of the century. Twenty one years old and soon to be married, he was ready to take on the world.

Chicago fit the young man's dreams. Even set against the short history of America, it was a new city. Sprung out of onion fields at a strategic portage Native Americans called "Checagou," it hadn't been incorporated until 1833. The infamous Chicago Fire of Oct. 8, 1871—just 8 years before TW's birth—destroyed much of the city but barely scratched its spirit. With lumber from the northern forests, Chicago sprung up on the Lake Michigan shore once more.

In 1886, when TW was just a child in Fort Wayne, Indiana, a bomb punctuated labor unrest at Chicago's Haymarket Riot and threatened to send the city into anarchy. In 1894, as TW entered his teens, a Chicago railway strike led by Eugene Debs paralyzed the country.

Soapbox orators preached the

Gospel of socialism, espousing public ownership of America's natural resources, banks and business monopolies.

In 1904, the same year Debs began his first of four tries for the Presidency as candidate of the Socialist party, the Republican party met in Chicago and elected the sitting President, Teddy "Rough Rider" Roosevelt, as their candidate.

Turn-of-the-Century Chicago was a city wrestling with new ideas, taking chances, exploring new horizons.

For young TW, the city represented a personal gateway to the West. Perhaps even more, it represented escape from his former life.

* * *

According to family lore, TW's grandfather—William Rieke—grew up in a wealthy German family. When William fell in love and married a family maid named Marie, his father became so enraged, he kicked the couple out of his home.

William and Marie joined the greatest human migration in the history of the world—Europe to the United States from the mid 1800s through the first quarter of the 1900s—and landed in the German and Swish-dominated settlement of Bremen, Indiana.

Whether or not the Riekes immigrated before their eldest son arrived is an open matter (a daughter and an Indiana census said the birth took place in Indiana; the "Record of Deaths, Allen Co., Ind. 1894-1896," said the baby was born in Germany). Aside from the question where, the *when* of Henry S. Rieke's birth appears fairly certain: Feb. 2, 1847.

The Lutheran church played a dominant role in America's small German communities. Martin Luther began the Protestant Reformation by nailing on the door of All Saints' Church in Wittenberg, Germany, 95 Thesis, or points of contention, aimed at the Pope-led Catholic church. In April of 1521, he stood before Catholic church leaders and proclaimed, "I cannot and will not recant anything." The spirit of standing strong and unwavering in Protestant convictions burned brightly in German breasts.

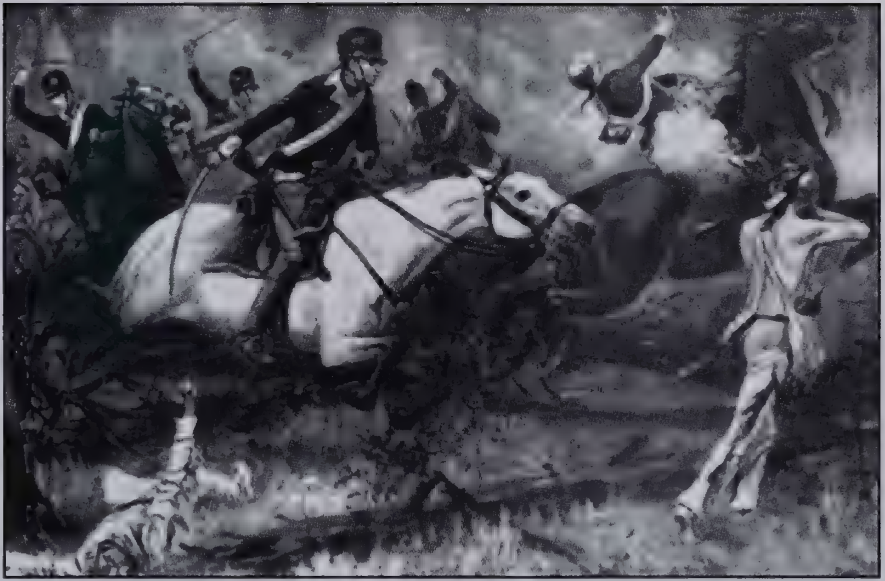
When the Riekes landed in Bremen, Rev. Georg Konrad Schuster, a German emigrant who except for amish-style facial hair resembled Luther, served as shepherd of the local Lutheran flock.

Born June 10 or 12, 1819, in Kadolzburg (or Katholfburg), Bavaria, Germany, Georg planted his roots deep in the Lutheran church. In 1833, at age 14, he gained command of his catechism and was confirmed in the faith. Schuster worked as a weaver's apprentice in Kadolzburg, then traveled to Neuendettelsau to begin ministerial studies under a Pastor Loehe.

At age 25, Schuster joined the wave of European emigrants washing onto America's shores. On July 29, 1844, he arrived in New York aboard the *Adler.* Schuster traveled to the Ohio River town of Pomeroy, where he secured a teaching job under the tutorial eye of Dr. William Sihler.

The American Northwest Territory was an exciting place for a young man. Immigrants eager to become settlers gathered in the river towns. From there they spread into new territories covered with the unconquered primeval forests. Romance, woven from threads of the unknown, covered the forest like a shawl. The woodland's human inhabitants—Native Americans, who outnumbered settlers in most areas—represented exotic enigmas.

An element of danger added to the intrigue; only 50 short years earlier, the forests of the Northwest Territory served as a battleground. On Aug. 20, 1794, General "Mad" Anthony Wayne charged



The Battle of Fallen Timbers helped the U.S. government wrest control of the area that would include Auburn and Fort Wayne from Native Americans. Major General Anthony Wayne led 3,700 men against an allied group of 2,000 British-backed Indians.

his troops against an allied force of Native Americans, which hid behind trees recently felled by a tornado. Wayne won the "Battle of Fallen Timbers," near what is now Toledo. Just a few short weeks later, Wayne built a fort near the confluence of three rivers, a high area dividing continental watersheds to the northeast and southwest, and an area that had been the seat of Indian power for more than 100 years. The General named the stockade "Fort Wayne."

On Aug. 3, 1795, chiefs of various Indian tribes signed the Treaty of Greenville at what is now the Ohio town of Greenville, located southeast of Fort Wayne. Although skirmishes with Native Americans would continue until 1813, through the Greenville agreement the Indians basically relinquished all land between the Ohio River and the Great Lakes.

Settlement of the area and its organization under U.S. federal authority soon followed. On March 1, 1803, Ohio officially became a state. Indiana joined the union Dec. 11, 1816. With the Indian wars over, the last soldiers marched out of Fort Wayne on April 19, 1819.

At first, the settlement's civilian population grew slowly. By 1830, Fort Wayne residents numbered only 150 and were mostly French fur traders and Native Americans.

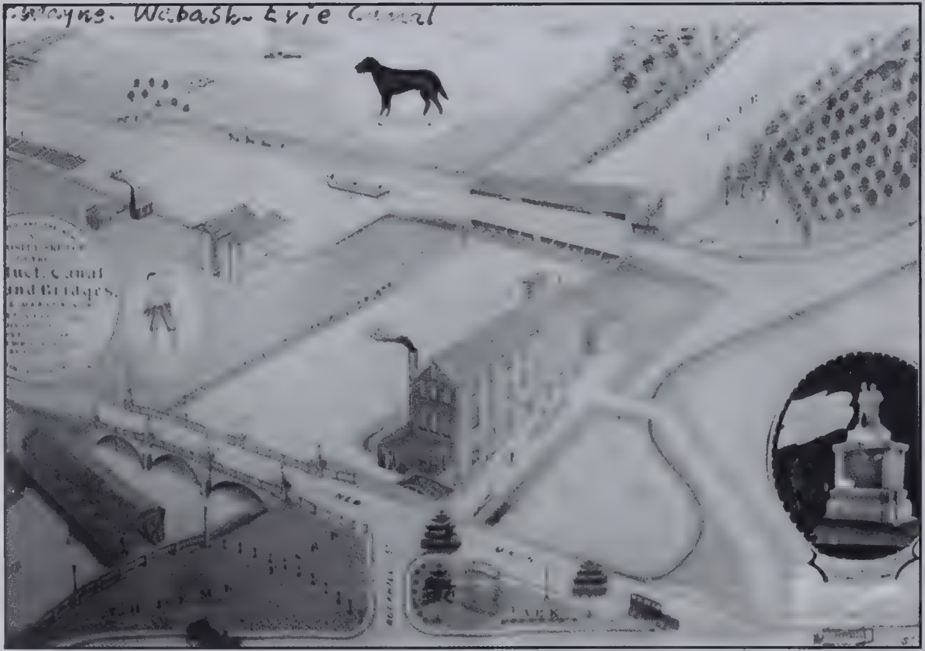
Transportation proved the major obstacle to settlement. Through the 1830s, virtually the entire white population of the U.S. clung to major waterways. This was especially true in the forested, untamed, pioneer "West." But man-made canals soon opened the interior. With its strategic location among major waterways, Fort Wayne was transformed from a military fortress into a transportation town.

In January of 1830, a German Lutheran, Henry Rudisill, arrived in Fort Wayne. Today, Rudisill is remembered mainly because of a single major city street named in his honor, but in the early days of Fort Wayne, he seemed to be everywhere.

Rudisill served as chairman of the Feb. 22, 1832, ground-breaking ceremony for the historic Wabash-Erie Canal. Fort Wayne, due to its geographical significance, was chosen as the waterway's starting point. One worker died for every six feet of canal dug both to the southwest and northeast. Despite the high human and dollar toll, canals eventually connected northern Indiana with the Great Lakes and Wabash River. The Miami Canal, which came a little later, connected the Wabash-Erie Canal with Cincinnati and the Ohio River.

Although canal building ranks high on mankind's list of engineering and construction achievements, the societal changes they wrought were even more remarkable. During the waterway era, Whites poured into previously unsettled areas.

In addition to canals, Rudisill applied his organizational skills to religion. Instead of joining in worship with the various small churches already in Fort Wayne, he sought to bring a church of his denomination to town. Through an eastern mission, Rudisill asked Lutherans to immigrate to Fort Wayne. After a few answered his call, he placed a want ad in an eastern religious publication seeking a minister.



This 1920-era drawing recreated Fort Wayne's canal era. Notice in the top center of the drawing how the canal crossed *over* the river.

Rev. Jesse Hoover arrived in Fort Wayne in the fall of 1836. A year later, he opened a school for Lutheran children and founded the First Evangelic Lutheran Church in Indiana. Then in May of 1838, at age 28, from what many of the time attributed to overwork, Rev. Hoover died. He was replaced by Rev. Frederick Conrad Dietrich Wyneken. Under Wyneken's guidance, in 1839 the Lutherans constructed their first church building at the site now occupied by Fort Wayne's massive St. Paul's Lutheran Church.

In 1845, Rev. Wyneken answered a call to become pastor of a church in Baltimore. On his trip east on the Ohio River, Wyneken stopped in Pomeroy and met Rev. Sihler. Wyneken liked the 43-year-old and recommended Sihler to the Fort Wayne church. In July of 1845, Sihler arrived in the Summit City. With him went his young apprentice, Georg Konrad Schuster.

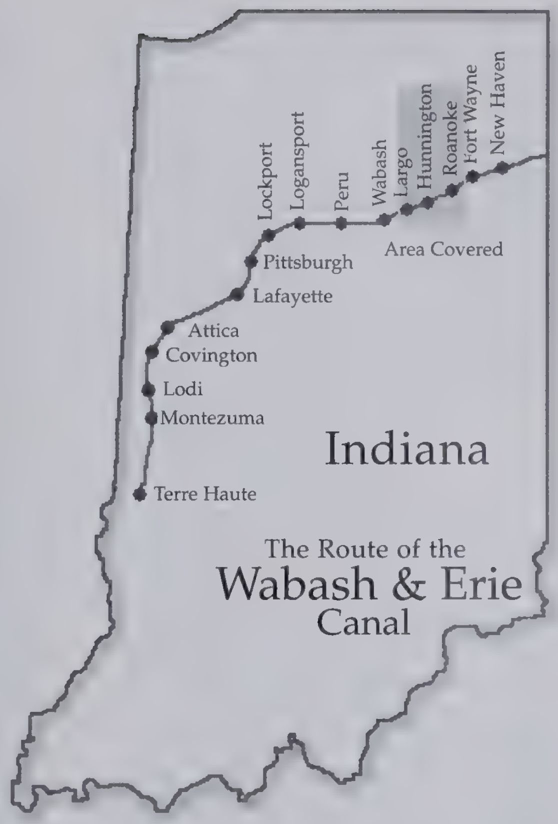
In Fort Wayne, Schuster continued his education for the ministry. Then, during the winter of 1845, he served as a student minister, or "vicar," at St. Lorenz Lutheran Church in Frankenmuth, Mich. When Schuster returned to Fort Wayne, Sihler encouraged him to undertake mission work in Marshall County, Indiana.

This area had only recently been taken from the Indians. White settlers broke ground for the town of Plymouth, which was chosen as county seat, about the same time the Indiana legislature officially recognized Marshall County in the spring of 1836. At the time, Native Americans outnumbered whites. That soon changed as Indian agent Abel Pepper relentlessly offered to buy the natives' property.

One group of Indians, led by a chief named Menominee, refused to sell. In an 1835 trip to Washington, D.C., and in an 1836 letter from the Secretary of War, Menominee received federal government recognition of the Indian's land ownership. But other Indians had sold their land and agreed to leave the area on Aug. 6, 1838. When that date arrived, whites wishing to claim choice sites overran the legally owned ground of Menominee's people. Enraged, the Indians destroyed a squatter's cabin. Whites retaliated by burning Indian cabins.

When further demands that Menominee sell and leave were rebuffed, Pepper lured the chief to a council. When the chief complied, 100 armed volunteers sanctioned by the state surrounded his village. Menominee and other Indian leaders were apprehended. The proud chief left his homeland at gunpoint. White agents conducted a final Indian removal from area around South Bend, Indiana, on Aug. 17, 1840.

* * *



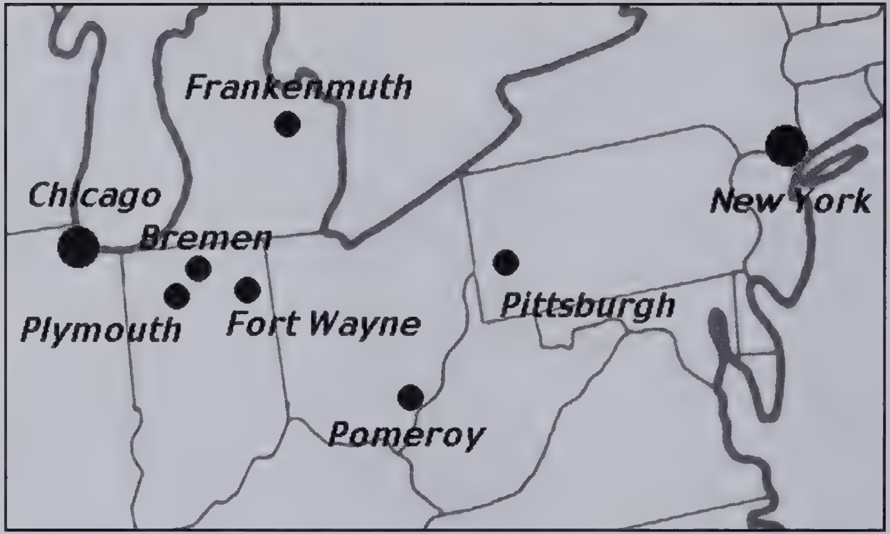
The Route of the
Wabash & Erie
Canal

When Rev. Schuster arrived in Marshall County in 1846, he faced an exhausting, lonely and even dangerous task in a rugged land. Pioneer ministers traveled broadly. Educated persons of any stripe were at a premium on the frontier, so, like judges and lawyers, pastors walked or rode on horseback around a "circuit" of churches.

Not everyone welcomed the minister's message. Unwavering in their own convictions were German "free thinkers." This small but stubborn group resented religion and employed threats of arson and death to make their point known to traveling clergy.

Despite the obstacles, Schuster's efforts resulted in rapid growth within Marshall County's Lutheran circles. October 14, 1846, marked the county church's official beginning. On that day, Sihler ordained Schuster as an official Lutheran minister and St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Bremen was born.

The pioneer pastor made progress in his personal life as well. Possibly as early as 1847, Rev. Schuster married Anna Barbara Braun; surviving evidence, however, suggests the marriage took place in the early 1850s. The confusion is caused by Catherine (or Katherine) Schuster. Listed by one source as the couple's oldest child, Catherine's birth date is given as April 9, 1849. However, in a list of Schuster's children provided by the church—a list that should have had access to the most reliable records possible—Catherine's name does not appear at all.



Sites of Schuster's American travels

In this time of dangerous occupations, poor sanitation, insect-carried disease and poor medical attention, one possible answer to the discrepancy is that Catherine's biological father had died. The little girl took the Schuster name upon her adoption by the minister who married her mother. Losing a spouse was not uncommon in pioneer Indiana, as Rev. Schuster would learn by experience.

He and Anna appear to have had three biological daughters: Maria (Aug. 19, 1853), Margaretha (June 20, 1855), and Susanna (Dec. 28, 1856).

After the third birth, Mrs. Schuster's health deteriorated. In November of 1857, insanity papers were filed. Anna's doctor judged her to be violent towards her husband and children and a danger to her community. Of course, medical technology of the time prevented doctors from establishing a cause for "insanity." The affliction could have been anything from depression to a brain tumor. Braun-Schuster's malady probably stemmed from a physical affliction for on June 29, 1861, only 39 or 40 years old, Anna Barbara Braun-Schuster died.

Schuster remarried before the year was out. His second wife, 30 or 31-year-old Maria Barbara Breising, bore the minister four more children: Emma (July 15, 1862), William (July 27, 1864), John (July 4, 1867), and Julius (July 12, 1869).

Rev. Georg Konrad Schuster

Although showered with progeny and respect, Schuster received little else in compensation. As a single man, he received $1.25 per week for shepherding his flock—50 cents of which went each week toward living expenses. As a married man with 20 years of service to St. Paul's, his salary soared to the not-quite-heavenly total of $480 per year.

Poor pay for overwork under punishing conditions came with the calling of a pioneer minister. Like others before him, Schuster too soon answered a call of another kind. After a long horseback ride through snow and rain, he contracted pneumonia. On Nov. 5, 1869, Schuster—just 50 years old—entered his eternal reward.

Although the Riekes and Schusters of Bremen, Indiana, unquestionably knew each other through church, at this point their histories officially intertwine. On July 31, 1870, just eight months after her father's death, Catherine Schuster married Henry S. Rieke.

* * *

The young couple moved from Bremen to Fort Wayne shortly after their marriage. Their first two children—Anna, Sept. 3, 1871, and Henry G., Sept. 4, 1873—would be born in the Summit City.

Fort Wayne must have produced culture shock in the small-town Riekes. Railroads, which began running in the city in 1852, caught and soon passed the canal in importance. The first railway, the Ohio & Indiana Railroad Company, organized in 1850, merged with a company formed two years later, the Fort Wayne & Chicago Railroad. Together they comprised the Pittsburgh, Fort Wayne & Chicago Railroad. Whether via water trenches or rails, pioneer public transportation construction brought a rough class of men to the Summit City. In 1875 the Chicago Times reported that "Fort Wayne by the record is the most lawless town in Indiana."

Mob fights, hangings (for which tickets were sold), and scores of taverns provided some of the entertainment. Lawlessness prevailed to the point that on July 22, 1877, when Mayor Charles Zollinger threatened a railroad strike crowd with "the strong arm of the Law," the strikers laughed in response.

The town's rough nature may or may not have figured in their decision, but the God-fearing Riekes soon moved back to Bremen. There, on Feb. 27, 1875, Edmund J. was born. And, on April 27, 1879, our Chicago adventurer, Theodore William, arrived.

The growing family's time in Bremen did not last. By the May 19, 1880, birth of Bertha, the family had returned to Fort Wayne. The city's directory for 1883 lists Henry S. working as a wagonmaker at 116 W. Main St. and living at 76 Union. The business address remained the same the two following years, but the home address shifted consecutively to 3 Lavina and 74 Baker streets.

Henry must have run his own shop, for the 1885 directory lists William—probably Henry's father—working for a 116 Main Street business named "H.S. Rieke." That same year, on September 23, Susan S. Rieke—Henry and Katherine's sixth child—was born.

In 1887, Henry S. began working as a carpenter for the Pennsylvania Company. Headquartered in offices northeast of Clinton Street, between Holman and Railroad streets, the company operated the Pittsburgh, Fort Wayne & Chicago Railroad. It's operations included a freight depot and a railroad car construction shop.

Three more children blessed the Rieke family. Herman W. arrived January 6, 1887, Katherine came along May 11, 1888, and Mary joined the clan December 14, 1890. By Katherine's birth, the family had moved to a house near the intersection of Indiana and Home avenues. At the time of Mary's birth, the city directory listed their address as 100 Indiana Avenue.

In 1890, the Riekes' two oldest boys began their work careers. Henry, 17, and Edmund, 15, became a cabinetmaker and carver respectively for a company just a few blocks south of the family home. In the coming decades, that same business would make quite a name for itself.

The Fort Wayne Organ Company began in 1871. One of the organizers, Isaac T. Packard, had worked as an organ builder in Chicago until that city's great fire destroyed his life's work. According to legend, he got on a train and told the conductor to put him off when his money ran out. He landed in Fort Wayne.

Packard and his partners built a plant on the east side of Fairfield Avenue, the present site of Packard Park. Just three years after the Rieke brothers joined the payroll, the company began to produce pianos. In 1899, the business changed its name to Packard Piano.

Although their address would change several times, the Henry S. Rieke family continually lived within easy walking distance of Packard. They moved onto Home Avenue in time to be listed at that address in the 1891 city directory. Several house numbers were given in the following years, but the family

SCHUSTER TOOK PART IN LUTHERAN HISTORY

Lutheran churches are grouped into associations known as synods. Around the time of Schuster's ordination, leaders of the Pennsylvania Synod oversaw operations in what we today call the Midwest. Grouping it with evangelical efforts in other backwards societies, they considered the area that now includes Indiana a mission field.

With its rapidly increasing population, the infant area soon was ready to stand on its own. In July of 1846, 16 Lutheran ministers met at Pastor Sihler's Fort Wayne home and laid the foundation of a new synod. In April of 1847, church leaders met in Chicago and officially formed the Synod of Missouri, Ohio and Other States. Today the organization is known as the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod.

Rev. Schuster attended the historic Chicago convention and St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Bremen joined the new synod as a charter member.

stayed in or around 20 Home Avenue for the next two decades (the changes well may have been due to Fort Wayne's emerging house-numbering system rather than a series of short moves).

Today, none of the addresses listed exist, but the Rieke house or houses sat near the present site of the Duemling Clinic, on the north side of Home Avenue, in the first block west of Fairfield Avenue.

In 1894, when just 15 years old, TW joined his older brothers on the payroll of Fort Wayne Organ Co. He was listed as a "sandpaperer." The next year, no occupation is listed next to TW's name. An interruption in employment would not be surprising for 1895 was, no doubt, a year of upheaval for the young man.

PACKARD
PIANOS

The large Packard Piano Company occupied the present site of Fort Wayne's Packard Park. TW was 15 when he started working at Packard in 1894.

On Feb. 8—his 48th birthday—Henry S. Rieke died. He left a widow and nine children.

How his father's death affected TW was not recorded, but it may have caused the 16-year-old to turn his back on the church. TW later told his own sons that his family was immersed in the Lutheran Church and he rebelled against their zealotry. Family and friends who knew TW as an adult said he steadfastly avoided churches.

Whether or not his spiritual philosophy evolved around his father's untimely demise, this much is certain: divergent religious opinions caused a rift between TW and his family. The wound never healed.

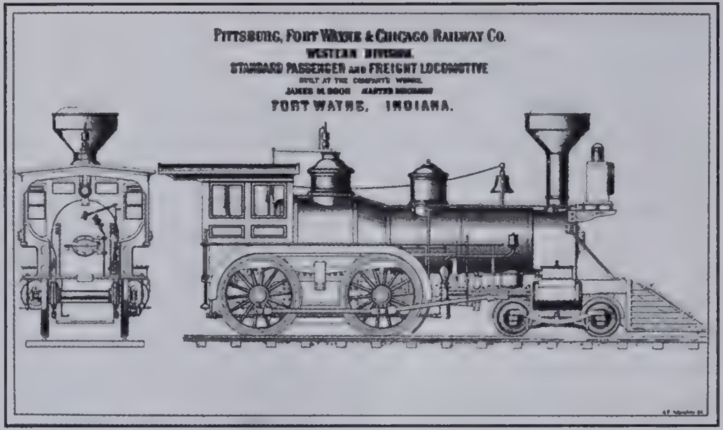
If religious differences alienated TW from his father, it didn't show in the young man's job choice after Henry's death. The 1896 directory lists TW working as a machinist for his father's former employer, the Pennsylvania Company (TW's older brother, Henry G., still worked there as a car builder). Directories from the three years that follow—and those immediately preceding his move to Chicago—list TW's occupation as a "laborer" for the Pennsylvania Company.

The job title doesn't suggest fulfillment at the workplace, but TW probably didn't mind the drudgery during this particular time. If TW told his children how he and Mary Rathert met, the story has been lost in time. The city directory, however, leaves a few minor clues.

In the 1896 edition, a Mary C.W. Rathert is listed as a domestic working in the home at 416 Fairfield Avenue. The following year, Mary Rathert appears as a domestic at 31 W. DeWald Street, another nearby address. Even today, the houses of this block retain some of the majesty of their former glory.

In 1898, the directory listed her first name as "Marie" and notes that Rathert boarded at 74 Home Avenue, which was probably in the same city block as the Rieke home (Glenn said his mother's birth name was "Marie," but through common usage became "Mary").

In an era when the working class got around mainly on foot, the probability that two young people who lived just a few blocks from each other might bump into each other regularly would be high. No matter how the connection was made, love ensued.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STANDARD PASSENGER and FREIGHT LOCOMOTIVE
BUILT AT THE COMPANY'S WORKS.
FORT WAYNE, INDIANA.

The above Pittsburgh, Fort Wayne & Chicago passenger and freight locomotive was built in Fort Wayne's Pennsylvania Company, where Henry Rieke and two of his sons–Henry Jr. and TW–worked.

A new millennium whispered of boundless horizons and exciting beginnings. Driven by ambition and wishing separation from his family, TW and Mary headed for Chicago. They were married in the big city on November 23, 1900. Using experience gained in the Fort Wayne railroad yards, TW first found tool and die work at the Benjamin Electric Company.

On Aug. 10, 1901, the couples' first child—Irvin Henry—was born. Irvin would reach an age of consciousness during the family's years in Chicago. He remembered attending school in Oak Park. To set the time and place, it's interesting to note that Oak Park's famous son, Ernest Hemingway, was only three years older than Irvin and also attended the town's public schools.

At some point during the family's initial eight years in Chicago, TW switched jobs. While employed at the American Can Company in the west suburb of Maywood, he proved his mechanical aptitude. TW invented an automatic machine which tested tin cans for leaks.

Years later, during a trip to California, TW took Glenn into an American Can plant on the west coast. The son remembered his father pointing out a mechanism with a wheel. It moved cans into position where a device pressed against the side to apply pressure. After more than three decades, the company still made use of TW's invention.

* * *

During the family's time in Chicago, TW became increasingly aware of the efforts of James J. Hill. Hill gained the nickname the "Empire Builder" for bucking odds on a large scale.

"Unlike other railroad builders such as Cornelius Vanderbilt who built their railroads around a population, Hill built a population around his railroad," wrote Christopher Muller, Webmaster of the web page RailServe.

Born in a log cabin on the Canadian frontier in 1838, Hill longed for adventure. After narrowly missing chances to become a trader in the Orient and a trapper in the north, he took a job with the Mississippi Steamboat Company in St. Paul, Minnesota. From this vantage point, he watched railroad equipment arrive by barge. In 1862, the first 10 miles of rail between St. Paul and St. Anthony (now Minneapolis) opened for business. Steamboat and railroad operations often required cooperation and Hill learned both businesses.

A financial downturn in the early 1870s proved a bust to many but a boom to Hill. In 1878, he and some partners purchased the St. Paul and Pacific Railroad for 20 cents on the dollar. This began a decades long land-buying, railroad-merging and rail-laying siege by Hill. His goal: to build a transcontinental railroad across the northern U.S.

Up until this time, all railroads had received government support, either in land grants or loans. Hill's privately-funded project, which would lay rails across Indian land, mountains, and vast stretches of prairie—all bereft of white settlers—became known as "Hill's Folly."

But there was nothing funny about Hill's hard-nosed tactics. When his track crews approached Fort Benton, Montana, around 1887, the community declined to let his track run through town. In a spiteful fit, Hill ordered the railroad built so the town was at least one mile from any point on the track. "This shows Hill's attitude toward those who tried to slow his construction," Muller concluded.

On Sept. 18, 1889, Hill renamed his endeavor the Great Northern Railway Company. Less than two months later, on November 8, Congress admitted Montana to the union as the 41st state.

In 1893, the Great Northern Railway reached Puget Sound. Hill's vision seemed within reach, his folly forgotten. Folks in the west began to refer to the railroad simply as the "Hill Lines."

Part of Hill's plan included building a population along the tracks to serve as customers of his railroad. Towards this goal, he employed marketing techniques unheard of in his day.

Originally, Hill Lines enticed settlers to land along the tracks by offering special rates on specific dates. Anyone wishing to look over land usually could get a discounted, round-trip ticket. In the spring and fall, Hill Lines offered settlers special one-way fares.

Beginning in 1894, the recruitment effort grew in organization and intensity. The railroad formed a separate department charged with promoting settlement. Hill sent agents to Scotland, England, Norway and Sweden to recruit immigrants. He dropped ticket prices for any immigrant willing to settle along his railroad. To further stimulate growth, he eventually would give farmers free imported cattle. In the late 1880s, a one-way ride from the east coast to Montana cost $10. Hill rented entire railcars to whole families for only slightly more.

In America, booklets singing the praises of the land along the Hill Lines were distributed through newspaper ads, public lectures and presentations at county and state fairs. In 1895, a Great Northern Railway executive attended an annual meeting of Indiana's Dunkard–or German Baptist–Church. One church official, Amos B. Peters of Walkerton (a town 20 miles west of Bremen), became a strong advocate of the program and settled his family on a North Dakota homestead. Recruitment efforts also took place among Indiana's Amish and Mennonite communities.

The all-out effort worked. On one day in March of 1901, Great Northern Railway moved 2,600 settlers and 400 carloads of their belongings to new homes in the west.

In 1909, a new flurry of Great Northern marketing washed over potential homesteaders. Newspaper ads, public lectures, stereopticon and motion picture shows proclaimed the virtues and opportunities of living in areas served by the Hill Lines. The railroad hired traveling representatives, based in major Midwestern cities, to conduct the campaign.

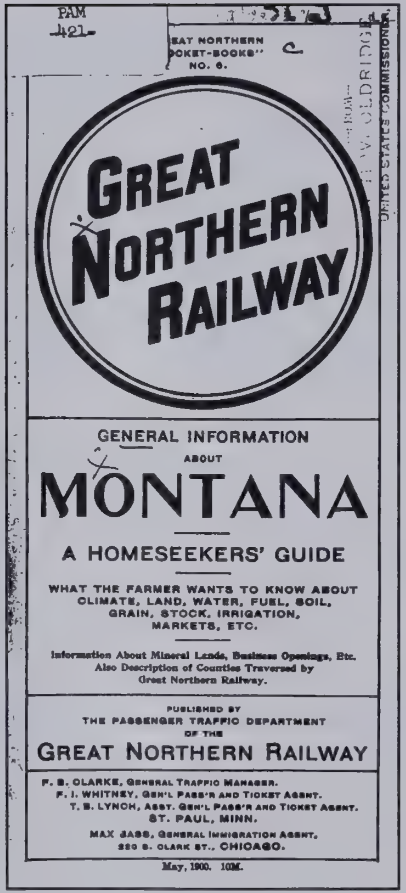
Hill's plan could have reached Rieke ears by several routes. Young TW lived in Fort Wayne when Great Northern Railway representatives visited near his birth town of Bremen. Despite the distance, news of a chance to homestead land certainly could have reached TW by way of family or friends. Then, after the Riekes moved to Chicago, TW could simply open a newspaper for additional exposure to Hill's homestead hype.

In 1909, the young man would have been a receptive listener. TW stood at a crossroads in his life. With two children—Ruth Louise arrived December 31, 1903—and having reached his 30th year, TW felt stuck in a greasy back alley. Easy Street seemed far away.

What Hill offered appeared enticing. In Montana, rarely had so much opportunity been available to so many. Money and social position did not matter. To be a homesteader required only three things: a strong back, a willing mind and an adventuresome spirit.

"Dad didn't know a thing about farming," Glenn said of his father, "but he wasn't afraid to try it."

The stage was set.



PAM
421

EAT NORTHERN
OCKET-BOOKS"
NO. 6.

UNITED STATES COMMISSIONER

GREAT NORTHERN RAILWAY

GENERAL INFORMATION
ABOUT
MONTANA

A HOMESEEKERS' GUIDE

WHAT THE FARMER WANTS TO KNOW ABOUT
CLIMATE, LAND, WATER, FUEL, SOIL,
GRAIN, STOCK, IRRIGATION,
MARKETS, ETC.

Information About Mineral Lands, Business Openings, Etc.
Also Description of Counties Traversed by
Great Northern Railway.

PUBLISHED BY
THE PASSENGER TRAFFIC DEPARTMENT
OF THE
GREAT NORTHERN RAILWAY

F. B. CLARKE, GENERAL TRAFFIC MANAGER.
F. I. WHITNEY, GEN'L PASS'R AND TICKET AGENT.
T. B. LYNCH, ASST. GEN'L PASS'R AND TICKET AGENT.
ST. PAUL, MINN.
MAX BASS, GENERAL IMMIGRATION AGENT,
220 S. CLARK ST., CHICAGO.

May, 1900. 10M.

A Great Northern Railway booklet. Note that Max Bass was the general immigration agent, headquartered in Chicago. The booklet was printed in May of 1900.

MONTANA BACKDROP
Chapter Two

Thomas Jefferson had a perplexing, exhilarating problem.

In 1802, Spain, a weak nation, governed the important American port of New Orleans. But Spain's control was misleading. Two years earlier, in a secret treaty with powerful Napoleon, Spain ceded all its North American Louisiana territory to France.

When the United States learned of the treaty, it recoiled. If France ever decided to exert its authority over the city, settlers in the area bounded by the Great Lakes to the north, the Ohio River to the south and east, and the Mississippi River in the west—an area known as the Northwest Territory—could be cut off from their most vital sea port!

To survive, the area might be forced to leave the United States and become a territory of France. The U.S. might face military action against formidable France. The fledgling nation might even have to ally itself with Britain, the country from which it had so recently and bitterly divorced.

So when the Spanish governor of New Orleans inexplicably suspended U.S. rights to store imports and exports in the city, the United States felt sure France pulled the strings.

Jefferson, the new country's third president, offered to buy from France New Orleans and land on the north edge of the Gulf of Mexico. If that didn't work, he told his representatives, seek a treaty with France guaranteeing U.S. rights in the port city.

Napoleon's dream of conquest knew no bounds, but his foundation of power had developed cracks. He realized it would be impossible to build a new empire on the North American continent when he desperately needed money to keep a firm grasp on Europe.

Once again, the Little Corporal pulled a strategic surprise. After initially spurning the American offer, he turned around and offered to sell not only the area Jefferson wanted, but all of the Louisiana Territory—an area that would double the United State's land holdings! The treaty we know as the Louisiana Purchase took place April 30, 1803.

Now, despite the good news—in fact, because of it—Jefferson had a problem. He had campaigned for his high office on the promise he would not go outside the limits of presidential power as defined in the Constitution. Yet, to complete the purchase, he had done just that. In addition, Congress—and by extension, the people they represented—still had not agreed to supply the money to complete the transaction.

On October 17, 1803, Jefferson described for Congress the benefits inherent in owning the Louisiana Territory: vast natural resources and millions of acres for settlement. The purchase would literally and figuratively change the face of the nation!

Jefferson need not have worried. Congress and the public reacted to his lapse in principle with overwhelming approval.

Before 1803 was out, a group of explorers gathered in St. Louis. Jefferson chose his young private secretary, Meriwether Lewis, to conduct an expedition through the Louisiana Territory. To help with the leadership responsibilities, Lewis turned to a longtime friend, William Clark. Jefferson's mandate to Lewis and Clark: appraise the nation's purchase and look for a water route to the west coast.

The group of explorers, known as the Corps of Discovery, set out in flatboats traveling up the Missouri River in the Spring of 1804. A full summer and 1,600 miles later, they arrived at the rounded huts of friendly Mandan Indians. Here the Corps spent the winter, near what is now Bismark, North Dakota.

The leaders, Lewis especially, spent the stopover making plans for the journey ahead. He interviewed Indians, cross-referenced their comments, and even drew maps of the unknown territory. Though the expedition from this point on would be traveling through land never before seen by white men, Lewis and Clark had detailed descriptions of landmarks to guide them.

In the Spring of 1805, the group—shorn of the bulky flatboats but still struggling in watercraft upstream—once again set out. Just after crossing today's border of the state of Montana, they encountered their first grizzly bear. Despite the Indians' fearful reverence for the great bruins, Lewis had eagerly looked forward to killing one. Several run ins with grizzlies changed his mind, however. After one particularly harrowing escape, the captain concluded in his notes: "I find that the curiossity of our party is pretty well satisfyed with rispect to this anamal."

Covering up to 25 miles a day, the Corps of Discovery paddled west. On prairie land covered with thick grass, they found enormous herds of buffalo. Like almost all animals of the wilderness area, the shaggy beasts initially showed no fear of humans. To make their way, Lewis' men would "frequently throw sticks and stones at them in order to drive them out of the way."

In the last week of May, 1805, the Corps traveled the Missouri from the present-day landmarks of Fort Peck Lake, past the town of Big Sandy, to the town of Fort Benton. Lewis called the area, "a desert, barren country" and noted it took only 36 hours for a tablespoon of water to evaporate. Clark stated his opinion of the land more bluntly. "I do not think it can ever be settled," he wrote.

Because of its harsh climate, what is now north-central Montana would wait almost 80 years after Lewis and Clark's visit before whites again turned their eyes its way. As in earlier chapters of American history, events that announced the coming of settlers were harsh, ignoble and violent.

From 1850 to 1889, the American bison or "buffalo" population in the U.S. dropped from an estimated 20 million to 551—an average decline of more than 1,450 animals per day. Some were killed by hunters paid to provide food for soldiers or railroad workers. Most were killed by sportsmen, who left the animals' bodies to rot where they fell.

In 1870, in what is now Montana, an estimated six million buffalo made their homes on the eastern and central plains. Nineteen years later, on Eagle Creek, the last known surviving buffalo in the Bear Paw Mountains was killed.

American Indians of the area would be pushed aside only slightly less harshly. Removing the buffalo had destroyed the plains Indians' main food source and way of life. At the same time, the white population moved in and greatly increased its land holdings. Conflicts between the two incompatible cultures increased.

At this tense moment in history, an American legend burst on the scene. Ironically, it was through defeat that General George A. Custer sealed the Native American's dismal fate.

Events over more than two decades set the battle lines: An 1855 treaty had reserved land around Big Sandy for natives. Then between 1862 and 1865, white men discovered gold in mountains to the west. Despite being in direct violation of treaties, prospectors poured into the area.

Many of the white men had a propensity for violence. Some were out-of-work Civil War veterans (Montana was at one time called the "Stubtoe State," due, reportedly, to the number of Confederate soldiers-turned-prospectors who found their army boots unfit for the rocky terrain). Other white men who flocked to the area were bandits looking to profit off the fortune of others. These rough men showed little consideration to the Indians, who were viewed as little more than nuisances. Violence was used on both sides to solve disputes.

To quell the problems and please constituents, Congress ordered Army action. The Army in turn ordered Native Americans to report to government agencies by January 31, 1876. If they did not, they would be considered "hostile," meaning the Army would attack them without warning. The Indians sent back word that they were hunting buffalo and would return to the agency in early spring.

The flamboyant General Custer was given command of an Army expedition against the Indians. The force was set to begin in April of 1876, but politics and some unsettled rivalries intervened.

Custer was called to Washington to testify in a Congressional impeachment investigation of Gen. William W. Belknap, the country's former Secretary of War and a personal friend of

President Ulysses S. Grant. Custer testified before a House Committee that he had refused to feed his soldiers from sacks of grain he believed stolen from the Indian Department (the Indian brand was stamped on the sacks). Custer contacted Washington about his suspicions but was told to accept the grain anyway. Custer said he believed the order to keep the grain came directly from Belknap.

After his committee appearance, Custer wanted out of Washington. He asked Grant's new Secretary of War to request his release from the committee. The secretary agreed, but Grant then ordered the secretary to withhold Custer's request.

Custer learned of Grant's interference, went to the committee himself and obtained his release. He boldly went to bid adieu to Grant. After waiting five hours in an outer office, Custer was told the President would not be able to see him. Despite failure to get his commander in chief's release, Custer left town.

Grant was furious. Telegrams flew. Army officials received orders to detain Custer at Chicago or St. Paul. Only after the intervention of a fellow officer die the Administration agreed to let Custer return to his western post unmolested.

William O. Taylor, who would fight along the Little Bighorn River with a battalion of soldiers not directly under Custer's command, later wrote on the emotional leader's mindset upon his return to what is now Montana: " .... *when he started on the expedition he was stung to the quick. And it can easily be imagined by anyone who knew the man that, if given the slightest opportunity he would not hesitate to take the greatest of risks to redeem himself."*

What happened exactly along the Little Bighorn River has been a historic topic of discussion since June 25, 1876. No white man under Custer's command survived to tell the tale.

This much is known: a little before noon, officers divided the regiment into two Battalions. Custer took command of 212 men. Men from the other battalion reported they last saw the General waving his hat to them as a signal of encouragement. It turned out to be a wave goodbye.

An Indian encampment totaling 10,000 souls knew the "Pony Soldiers" were planning to attack. With a force of about 2,500 warriors, the natives pinned down the Battalion with which Taylor fought, then rushed back to meet Custer.

Ever heedless of danger, Custer led his anxious men directly down a ravine where the Indians hid. The soldiers, surprised at the number of warriors and ferocity of the attack, retreated to a ridge. They dismounted and gathered in formation, hoping to hold off their screaming attackers long enough for help to arrive. But the other Battalion—Taylor and Indian survivors claimed—remained in a defensive position within earshot of Custer's battle, despite the fact that they could have marched out unchallenged. In about 20 minutes, all 212 members of Custer's Battalion lay dead.

Although victorious in the short run, the Battle of Little Bighorn spelled the natives' long-term defeat. Any calls from the white community for mercy were drowned by shouts for an immediate end to the red threat. The Administration and Army answered the shouts.

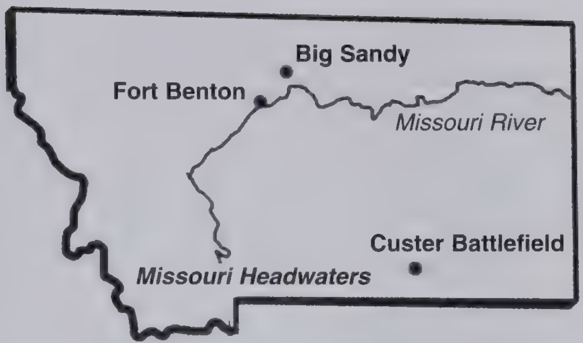
Only once more would Native American pose a threat to white safety, this time quite close to what is now Big Sandy, Montana.

White authority never quite understood Indian authority. The natives grouped themselves into myriad bands, clans and tribes. Each group might have several "chiefs"; for example, a peace chief and a war chief. Consensus, naturally, could rarely be reached. So for organization purposes (and, in defense of U.S. Indian administrators, to smooth what must have been frustrating diplomacy), the government recognized or appointed one overall chief to speak for a large group of natives.

The problems caused by this type of disenfranchised representation were clearly exhibited by the Nez Perce Indians. In 1863, the U.S. government considered a new treaty to have been approved by a majority of the Nez Perce, when less than a third actually supported it.

In 1872, an effective spokesperson from among the Nez Perce arose. Chief Joseph argued against the legality of the 1863 treaty. He eloquently put the natives' plight into words. The American Press recognized the power in Joseph's arguments and soon the country became captivated by the Nez Perce' s plight.

Public sympathy accompanied the Indians as they accepted a Presidential Commission order to move onto a reservation. But before the natives complied, a frustrated band of young warriors violently lashed out at a particularly hated group of white settlers.



A series of battles with the Army followed and became known as the Nez Perce War of 1877. The natives pulled off several surprisingly successful campaigns and proved elusive. The American public incorrectly attributed the wily military moves to Chief Joseph. In fact, while Chief Joseph's star remained bright with the white public, his pacifist, non-violent opinions caused his influence among his own people to fall.

Nez Perce women and children were among the casualties of the war, which spread out over 18 engagements. The fighting came to a close in the Bear Paw Mountains, about 45 miles east of Big Sandy's future site, where—on Oct. 5, 1877—Chief Joseph surrendered.

This portion of the speech he made that day shows the simple power of his words:

> *"I want to have time to look for my children and see how many of them I can find. Maybe I shall find them among the dead. Hear me, my chiefs, I am tired; my heart is sick and sad. From where the sun now stands I will fight no more forever."*

Two years later, the U.S. government built Fort Assiniboine in the area (just south of present-day Harve, Montana). Supplies chugged up the Missouri on steamboats, which unloaded at Fort Benton, Coal Banks, or Cow Island. Along Big Sandy Creek, at the junction of several trails used by suppliers of Fort Assiniboine, a warehouse was built. The seed of the town of Big Sandy had been sown.

As the buffalo and Indians disappeared, cowboys and cattle appeared. By 1885, cattle owners considered land south of the Missouri River overgrazed. After a particularly rough winter in 1886-1887, cattlemen began to encroach on unspoiled grasslands north of the Missouri in violation a treaty with the small Gros Ventre Indian tribe. In 1887, any obstacles produced by the treaty–as well as the Indians–were removed. A figurative stampede ensued.

That same year, Indian treaties and other legal obstacles fell before the Iron Horse. From April 2 to the middle of September, James Hill's work crews of up to 9,000 men and 7,000 horses laid 550 miles of railroad track across the prairie.

Big Sandy marks that pivotal year—1887—as its official birth year. At the time the town boasted a warehouse, a train depot made out of an old box car, another box car serving as the section foreman's house, and nine saloons. The large number of saloons created rivalries and resulted in unique practical jokes. One popular gag at Big Sandy was to hitch horses to a saloon and drag it miles out into the prairie.

For the next 24 years, Big Sandy served as the supply, financial, transportation and entertainment center of the area's open-range community. Ranchers built homes on the prairie. Their hired hands, the cowboys, lived in camps on the range. Horses provided all transportation. Visits to town were seldom, celebrated and bawdy. To meet its unique community's needs, Big Sandy added a store, hotel and brothel.

Of course, the main action in town took place at the stockyard. The Hill Lines provided the vital link to markets in the east. At roundup time, cattle formed long lines waiting their turn to board a train.

But the free-roaming cowboy days were numbered. Soon sheep joined cattle on the prairie. These wooly commodities offered a truly democratic avenue to ranching. Entire herds could be rented for one-half of the purchase price of its wool. At the end of three years, aspiring ranchers taking on this arrangement got to keep one half of the sheep born under their stewardship, plus survivors from the original herd.

One sheepherder who worked in the area late in the cattle-and-sheep days but in time to be listed among the earliest permanent settlers, was a big German who's path would cross and intertwine with the Riekes later on. His name: Hans Lehfeldt.

On the heels of sheepherders like Lehfeldt, human homesteaders trickled in.

Homesteading seems on its surface to be the innocent act of a naive government. Since the U.S. owned what many considered a limitless amount of tillable land, why not give it free or at low cost to any man willing to settle and improve it? What better way to settle the interior? All men would be given an equal chance to succeed or fail. Homesteading represented the American Dream.

But the actual history of homesteading gets quite tangled and complicated in the politics that midwifed its birth. After Eli Whitney's invention of the cotton gin in 1792, the divide between the industrial North and the plantation South grew wider. The North, cheered on by advocates such as New York Weekly Tribune editor Horace Greeley, envisioned an independent America, full of family-sized farms and entrepreneurial enterprise. The South remained married to a colonial type of economy; it's large plantations basically produced one crop—cotton—which was traded for everything from life's necessities to European luxuries. The North favored high tariffs to encourage manufacture of a wide variety of American goods. The South, because of its heavy dependence on trade, fought for small tariffs.

And, of course, the North built its economy on laborers who were paid wages and who the federal government considered free men (and women and children). The South built its King Cotton economy on slave labor, which relied on people who the government considered property.

The regional arguments distilled into one big debate: whether rights rested more heavily with the national government or individual states. The North favored a strong Union, or federal government. The South preferred that each state make the majority of governing decisions.

Though far removed from the arguments, the West became a battleground. Both North and South knew each additional territory admitted as a state to the Union would shift the balance of power. In other words, a new "slave" state added votes in the House and two additional Senators to pass legislation in favor of the South.

A desperate battle to admit "free" or "slave" states to the union followed. Some unhappy chapters in American history were written during this time, including the Mexican War and and the fighting in "Bleeding Kansas." In one of the more embarrassing passages, independent southern soldiers of fortune made several unsuccessful attempts to invade and conquer Cuba—they had hoped to make the island a slave state.

Northerners concerned with a mixed bag of issues—abolition, western settlement, the balance of power in Congress—formed a political party in 1848. The Free Soil Party took as its slogan "Free Soil, Free Speech, Free Labor and Free men."

Although the term "Free Soil" meant an area that did not allow slavery, the party could have attached a second, literal interpretation to the words—as in "Soil for Free." When the Free Soilers built their political platform, they included a plank which outlined a "homestead" law. It proposed legislation which would give settlers land for free or a low price on the condition that they live on the land for a length of time and make improvements.

To Greeley, one of the Free Soilers' goals should be that the American interior "be placed forever beyond the grasp of the slavocracy ..." So idealism and more than a dash of practical political positioning prompted the editor to write perhaps his most famous line, "Go West, Young Man!"

Despite Greeley's push, the first Homestead Law wouldn't be passed until 1862. Politics, again, played a role in the birth. Democrat James Buchanan vetoed the bill in 1860. Two years later, Republican Abraham Lincoln signed a similar bill into law.

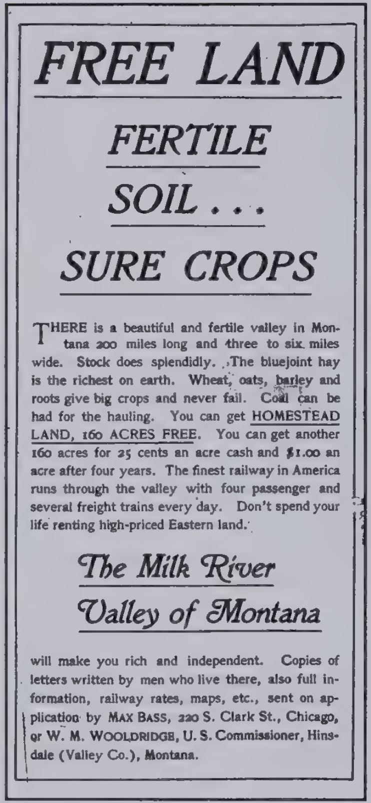
Homesteading in general promised a tough way of life. The problems of turning previously uncultivated ground into a working farm were aggravated by the backgrounds of people who attempted to do so. Some were factory workers who had never worked a plow or planted a seed. Others were immigrants even further handicapped by a language barrier. All pioneer farmers were required to supply large measures of self-reliance to survive, since they found themselves far from established services.

In north-central Montana's lonely prairie, homesteaders encountered good news and bad news. The good news: the treeless landscape eliminated the need to chop trees and clear land. The bad news: the lack of trees indicated little rainfall and a harsh climate.

To overcome the area's shortcomings, the Great Northern Railway and Montana's civic boosters exaggerated—some might say lied about—the area's homesteading qualities. The reproduction on the following page appeared on the back of a brochure titled, "Great Northern Railway, General Information about Montana, A Homeseeker's Guide," distributed from the railroad's Passenger Traffic Department from its Chicago offices, beginning in May of 1900.

In that same spirit of boosterism, the following passage appeared in the May, 1911, issue of "Marvelous Montana" magazine:

Few if any, of the new Montana towns occupy a more favorable spot than does Big Sandy. Located in the center of a beautiful area known as the Lake Basin country at the foot of the Bear Paw Mountains with broad stretches of what are known as the Paradise Prairies to the west .... its future is most apparent .... the homeseekers shacks can now be seen as far as the eye can reach, and the plow, the seeder, and the harvester will mark a new epoch in this area's future.



FREE LAND

FERTILE SOIL . . .

SURE CROPS

THERE is a beautiful and fertile valley in Montana 200 miles long and three to six miles wide. Stock does splendidly. The bluejoint hay is the richest on earth. Wheat, oats, barley and roots give big crops and never fail. Coal can be had for the hauling. You can get HOMESTEAD LAND, 160 ACRES FREE. You can get another 160 acres for 25 cents an acre cash and $1.00 an acre after four years. The finest railway in America runs through the valley with four passenger and several freight trains every day. Don't spend your life renting high-priced Eastern land.

The Milk River Valley of Montana

will make you rich and independent. Copies of letters written by men who live there, also full information, railway rates, maps, etc., sent on application by MAX BASS, 220 S. Clark St., Chicago, or W. M. WOOLDRIDGE, U. S. Commissioner, Hinsdale (Valley Co.), Montana.

Although it's impossible to see into the hearts of the purveyors of these myths, profit counted among their motives. Put simply, settlers meant money.

James Hill's plan included populating the entire length of his railway. Homesteaders would assure railroad income for decades. How? By building passenger business to the area. In addition, each spring homesteaders in even the remotest area might order by mail a harvester from McCormick and overalls from Sears—both Chicago-based companies. At harvest time, rails carried the produce of the prairie into the city. In other words, trains were an indispensible link in the supply line, profiting both ways.

Young TW Rieke swallowed James Hill's hook. He loved open spaces. He longed for a place to invest his sweat and skill. He, too, dreamed of profit, of finding that map to Easy Street.

In the warm months of 1908, TW, Mary and their young family traveled on the Great Northern Railway to Montana for a look around. They got off in the small town of Big Sandy.

Several members of Mary's family had staked homesteads about 38 miles southeast of town—a full, hard day of travel by horse and wagon. On this exploratory visit, the Riekes stayed with a relative of Mary's sister's husband. Fred Rolf's father, a man named Sneath, had lived in a cabin along the Missouri River since the area's cattle-grazing heyday. Sneath, the Rieke children would remember, wore long white whiskers like Santa Claus (although unlike Yuletide impressions of the revered elf, Sneath's beard sported dark stains of tobacco juice originating at each corner of his mouth).

In 1909, another 80,000 acres of prairie would open to homesteaders. Previously used by large sheep ranchers, the area was known as Lonesome Prairie. In the area north of the Missouri River, TW saw flat, treeless land covered with Buffalo Grass. A plateau, which area residents called the "Eight Mile Bench," framed the view to the southwest. The beautiful Bear Paw Mountains rose in the northeast.

To the Chicago machinist's eyes, clouded by a determination to spend every ounce of his working energy to build a place of his own, the land looked like heaven.

HOMESTEAD DAYS

Chapter Three

Then come to this country, there's room for you all,
Where the winds never cease and the rains never fall ...
There's nothing to lose and nothing to gain
While starving to death on a government claim
from a poem in the Bear Paw Mountaineer, Jan. 25, 1912

In Chicago all through the winter, spring and summer of 1908-09, the Riekes made plans to move to their Montana homestead. They decided what household items to leave, what to take, what to sell, what to buy. TW had to choose farm equipment, livestock to raise, seed to plant.

The time must have been exciting—and nerve wracking. At age 31, TW would be starting from scratch. If he made right decisions, the family might be on the road to Easy Street. If he made wrong decisions, they would be fighting for survival.

About that time, the Great Northern Railway offered homesteaders this deal: fill up a boxcar headed to your homestead with anything you want—furniture, horses, wagons, whatever—for $75.

By way of example, this list from Sue O. Hill's "The Way It Was," describes items loaded into two boxcars by two families who arrived at Big Sandy four years after the Riekes: *...eight horses, four cows, two pigs, some chickens, a little dog,* *our furniture (enough for two homestead shacks), including an upright piano, 500 cans of fruit and vegetables, twenty gallons of lard, cured meat, a tub of rhubarb roots, machinery such as plows, wagons and buggy. You name it, we had it.*

By fall of 1909, the Riekes had made their decisions. At the Chicago station, they loaded their railroad car. TW rode inside the boxcar to protect the valuables. Mary and the children—Irvin, 8, and Ruth, 5—rode a passenger car and promised to meet TW at departure.

For 1,400 miles they swayed to the clack-clack of the train: across Wisconsin, then Minnesota and the long, dry stretch of North Dakota. In an age when families didn't move far or often, the Riekes were proving particularly adventurous. When TW and Mary relocated from Fort Wayne to Chicago, they crossed the width of the State of Indiana. The move to Montana would take them eight times that far.

If the physical distance felt vast, the social and lifestyle change from their old way of life would be mind boggling. To Irvin and Ruth, it must have seemed as if they were traveling to another world.

* * *

In contrast to the populated bustle of Chicago, the north Montana prairie stood virtually empty. The land was dry and treeless. When the buffalo disappeared, so did other large grazing animals and their natural predators. As a result, small animals such as coyotes, prairie dogs, jackrabbits, prairie chickens and sage hens ruled the prairie.

McNAMARA & MARLOW
IMPLEMENTS.
BIG

TW received a line of credit at McNamara & Marlow soon after the family arrived in Big Sandy in 1909. The Riekes were among the first homesteaders to arrive in the area.

Photo courtesy of "Pioneer Days at Big Sandy."

In early homesteading days, even human sightings were rare. Glenn's mother would say in later life that she spent a year and a half on the homestead before seeing a woman other than an Indian squaw. "Our homestead was close by the big Blackfoot Indian (Rocky Boys Indian) Reservation that had been set aside by the government," explained Glenn. "The Indians would come by on horseback and stop at our place for a cup of coffee or something to eat, then go on their way. They were kind of a ragged looking outfit. The ones we saw were the nomad characters among them, but we got along well."

Early settlers named the area Lonesome Prairie. When promoters started a push to change the name to the more enticing–and marketable–Paradise Prairie, the editor of the Bear Paw Mountaineer received a letter from "Hard Scrabble Ole," dated Nov. 11, 1911. The letter said, in part:

JT cal his place paradice prairie, de old timer cal him Lonsom praire and JT damfol for trying to change nam. ay tank Lonsom praire ban best nam ay find purty dam

Lonsom out har .....

When the Riekes arrived, they were one of the first 1,000 families to arrive in the area—quite probably, one of the first 500. They disembarked at the Big Sandy depot 1 1/2 miles north of town. The train pushed homesteaders' boxcars onto a side track, then continued on its way.

Mary's family must have welcomed the Riekes, for TW soon asked to borrow a horse from his brother-in-law, Fred Rolf. With the steed, TW paid a visit to the general store in Big Sandy. Although he had no money, TW returned from McNamara & Marlow's with a wagon, team of horses and a season-long supply of food essentials, what homesteaders called a "winter grubsteak." The store owners had perceived TW's honesty and entrusted him with $250 worth of goods bought on credit.

After unloading their boxcar, the family bumped by wagon 38 miles southeast to their homestead. They probably did not know exactly where their property lines began and ended. Surveyors wouldn't officially categorize the country for several years to come.

Still, it must have been an emotional moment for the Riekes to look over land and know that it was theirs. Peering past the buffalo grass, TW saw fertile soil and bumper crops. Overhead, the sky reached toward endless possibilities.

Survey method went round and round

The common method of determining Montana homestead boundaries would leave modern surveyors spinning.

According to Lou Lawrence in "Pioneer Days at Big Sandy," new arrivals tied a white rag to a wagon wheel. After converting one revolution to rods, the hopeful farmer simply counted out wagon wheel revolutions to outline his 160 free government acres.

But dreams would have to wait. Practical matters needed attention. The Riekes' first order of business: build a shelter.

Because winter was coming on, the family opted for a quick-yet-effective prairie home. With the help of relatives, TW dug a basement. He covered the hole with logs and threw dirt on top. With the addition of a door, their country home was complete.

Despite its lack of frills, the temporary home proved perfectly suited to its environment. Rieke family members would remember this first winter of living under the ground like prairie dogs as the warmest and best-protected they spent during their years in Montana.

The farm animals needed shelter also. Using only shovels, TW and his helpers fashioned 3 to 4-inch thick bricks of dried sod. The bricks then were stacked on top of each other to form walls of a barn.

Next, the men drove wagons to the Missouri River four miles to the southwest and dragged logs to the homestead. After placing the logs as rafters in the barn, more sod was laid in between the timbers. Before long, the same Buffalo Grass that covered the prairie grew out of the Rieke barn roof.

The barn wasn't fancy. There wasn't even a door to open or close. The only improvement TW would make inside was to build a couple of stalls. But the building proved adequate for protecting the family's animals from the weather.

Winter blows cold on the Montana flatland. With no trees to block its path, the wind whistles in warning to all life forms. Temperatures drop dozens of degrees below zero. Fields become frozen bricks. The days are short, but that's just as well. There simply isn't much to do.

The first months in Montana provided the Rieke family with an especially harsh lesson in the prairie's callous disregard for life. Temperatures dropped so low that a neighbor's herd of sheep froze to death in the field.

Imagine: sheep freezing to death!

The tragedy, however, turned into economic opportunity for Irvin. The neighbor gave the boy 10 cents a head to go into the field and sheer the sheep where they lay.

* * *

The Riekes looked forward to the spring of 1910 with high anticipation. It meant the end of suffering through the cold. Plus, they finally could put their plans to work.

When the warm sun arrived, it illuminated the monstrous task they faced. TW had grown up in the city. He didn't know how to farm, yet his family's survival depended on his success in the fields. Undeterred, TW attacked the obstacles with a resolve that would become his trademark. He wasn't afraid to try something new. What he lacked in knowledge, he would make up in a willingness to learn, hard work and endless hours of effort.

Mary's family and the neighbors lent advice. They spread the gospel outlined in Prof. Thomas Shaw's 460-page prairie bible, titled "Dry Land Farming." From Shaw and other agriculture preachers of the day, the prairie farmer formed a creed which could be summed up in two words: plow deep.

The steel blade bit hard into the Rieke fields, exposing the earth's precious moisture just as the dry season began. TW planted his 160 acres in the crops most favored at that time in the area: wheat, oats and flax.

When the planting was complete, the Riekes traveled to Fort Benton, a town on the banks of the Missouri, 60 miles southwest of the homestead. There the family purchased supplies and lumber to build a frame house. Following the example of other area homesteaders, they used the lumber to build a raft and floated their wares down river.

When the Riekes reached the landing near their homestead, the sky showed signs of a brewing storm. The family knew it didn't rain often in Montana. They would learn that, when it did, it rained hard.

To protect their supplies, TW and Mary unloaded the raft and placed their goods in an old trapper's cabin which had stood for decades as a solitary companion to the river. Then the parents quietly walked over to check on their property, leaving Irvin and Ruth asleep on the raft.

While they were gone, the storm struck. In addition to rain, the sky delivered a heavy dose of lightening and thunder. When the weather broke, TW and Mary hurried back. Their hearts jumped when they looked toward the landing and saw a shimmering light brightening the dark sky.

Running the rest of the way, the frantic parents found Irvin and Ruth still asleep on the raft. Nearby stood the charred remains of the trapper's cabin. It had survived untold storms in that harsh environment only to succumb to an unlucky lightning strike on the one night it cost the Riekes their supplies! A lone item survived. Irvin had bought a motorbike with the money he made sheering dead sheep.

Despite the setback, the early years on the homestead bristled with promise. With help from Mary's brothers–Henry and Carl Rathert–TW used the lumber transported in the raft to cover the basement hole with a frame house. The home had a living room and kitchen downstairs, three small bedrooms upstairs, with a porch out front.

Buoyed by TW's hard work and decent rainfall, crops popped out of the prairie sod the first few years. With this early success, the little farm grew. It soon boasted a sod "summer kitchen," an outhouse, and a hand-dug well (the well water, however, proved to be alkaline, unfit for human consumption).

The extended family grew as well. TW's sister Susi, just 25 years old, came to Montana for a visit. During her stay, she met the big sheepherder, Hans Lehfeldt. Susi and Hans fell in love and were married (their daughter, Mildred Hoge, still lived in Montana at the time of this writing and provided valuable material for this book).

Susi started a trend. Mary's sister, Louise, visited next. She fell in love with and married Fred Rolf. The couple built their home on the 8-Mile Bench. In a matter of a few years, a sizeable clan comprised of Ratherts, Riekes, Lehfeldts, and Rolfs had accumulated in the area south of Big Sandy.

Then in 1911, the clan increased another way. During the hot summer that year, Mary and TW made the trek to Fort Benton while Irvin and Ruth stayed with Old Man Sneath. There on July 19, in the Fort Benton Hospital, their third child—and only offspring to be delivered in a medical facility—was born.

The parents named him Glenn Theodore Rieke.

* * *

Glenn would spend his first seven years on the homestead. In several ways, his life in Montana would serve as a time frame to the homestead era.

Four months after Glenn's birth, some good, old-fashioned western violence erupted. A few miles north of Big Sandy, at Box Elder, sheepherders and homesteaders clashed over land. Then, a little further north near Fort Assinniboine, sheepherders and cattlemen mixed it up over grazing rights. The confrontations culminated in a gun fight on December 28, 1911, at the P Cross cattle camp. The U.S. Army was called in to settle the dispute.4

TW, Mary, Susi and Hans got together for this group shot almost 30 years after the homestead days ended.

Hans became a homesteader

The Lehfeldt family came to America from Sachleswig Holstien, Germany.

Hans was born February 5, 1882, in Dennison, Iowa. About the time the boy turned 7, his family moved to Montana.

As a young man, Hans entered sheep farming. He did so in the waning days of the open range.

A few years later, about the time the Riekes arrived, Hans filed for a homestead of his own.

If Glenn's birth marked the end of the Old West, it also coincided with the real beginning of the homestead era. The Riekes were among the first of the prairie farmers to trickle into the Big Sandy area between 1908 and 1910. In 1911, the trickle turned into a torrent.

Businesses and banks sprouted in Big Sandy to serve the emerging community's needs. In March of 1911, the first issue of the Bear Paw Mountaineer appeared.

Glenn's mind began recording events in 1914. In general, the homestead years burned in his heart a life-long love of the outdoors, open spaces and freedom. Specifically, the time provided his memory with snapshots of the farm and events which, placed together, provide a picture of life on the prairie.

One of Glenn's earliest memories dated back to a day 1914, when a woman arrived at the Rieke home. With the help of this midwife, Mary gave birth to the third Rieke boy—Warren.

Around 1970, Glenn and Irvin returned to the Rieke family Montana. In the picture above, Glenn looks for artifacts in a hole where the house once stood. Note the rough buffalo grass and treeless, hilly terrain. Almost 55 years before the photo was taken, Glenn ran over these hills to tell his father that the house had caught fire.

Most of Glenn's memories, however, pertained to the small details of life—the places and situations that would be of interest to an active young boy.

"We cut Missouri River ice into blocks," Glenn said in describing the contents of the cool, dark sod building the Riekes called their "summer kitchen." "Those blocks then would be hauled back to the house in the wagon. Normally you'd use sawdust to insulate ice, but my folks didn't have sawdust, so they used straw. They'd lay a block down and put straw on top. Then they'd set another block of ice on that. The straw acted like mortar between joints. It kept the blocks from freezing together so you could take one block out at a time." Because the ice cooled the entire sod building, the family used the front portion as a pantry—hence the name "summer kitchen."

Of course, out in the open prairie, a cool, dark place containing food attracted more than little boys. Mice and packrats, a large variety of rat named for its habit of collecting anything and everything, found the summer kitchen irresistible.

To counteract the rodents' uninvited visits, the Rieke family found a unique solution. "A big, old black snake about five feet long would lay up on one of the shelves about two or three feet off the ground," recalled Glenn with a twinkle in his eye. "Dad left him there because he kept the rats out. We never bothered the snake at all, so he was kind of a pet." The arrangement didn't thrill everyone in the family. "The only one that didn't want to go in that ice house was my sister," said Glenn with a chuckle. "She didn't like that snake in there."

When he wasn't watching rodent rivalries, Glenn found entertainment in the work his father and older brother did on the homestead. "I followed Dad around all the time. I would walk behind the plow when he was putting in the crops." Glenn chuckled, and added, "I think I was in the way quite a bit!"

For TW, a little boy at his feet would be the least of his problems. On the homestead, even the most basic of life's necessities could not be taken for granted.

In one case at least, securing drinking water became a literal battle. "We used the (alkaline) well water for livestock and had to carry our water from the closest springs," Glenn explained. "There was a spring about three or four miles from our place that had nice, clear water. We had barrels that Dad took back and forth in the wagon. What he brought back would be our drinking water for two or three weeks." Several homesteaders used the spring. One, named Joe Cordry, was a man of Bulgarian descent. "He was a little, squat-type fellow, a former boxer," said Glenn. "Strong as a bull!" One day, TW returned from the spring with—in Glenn's words—"the prettiest pair of black eyes you ever saw." The family asked what happened. TW simply said, "I got in an argument with Joe Cordry."

Those few words would be all the family learned of the fight, but events that followed hinted at what might have happened. "Dad never said much about it and we never found out who won," Glenn said. "But we continued to use the spring for as long as we lived there."

Heating fuel presented another logistical challenge. Trees along the Missouri River were too far away and few in number to burn for heat, so homesteaders turned to the resources of the nearby Bear Paw Mountains.

"My brother Irvin headed up there with a couple of men to dig coal," Glenn recalled. "There was a coal vein in the mountains. They brought back a load for us."

On one trip Irvin met some fellow coal hunters and decided to camp with them. That night, the young man tried an unusual meal. "Irv said they killed a horse and ate it," Glenn recalled. "He said the meat was kind of greasy and tough, but it wasn't too bad."

When basic supplies weren't being gathered, the homestead farmer spent time building and repairing equipment.

"Dad would shrink an iron rim onto a wagon wheel," said Glenn as one example. "The ring was a little bit smaller in diameter than the wheel itself, so he'd lay this iron ring in a fire to get it hot so it would expand. While it was hot, he'd put it on the wheel. It was so hot the wood rim would flare up."

The rest of the family stood nearby, armed with buckets of water, "When Dad said 'Go!', we'd dump water onto the rim to cool it and shrink it onto the rim without burning the wood," said Glenn.

As the population of the Big Sandy area grew, so did the number of social events. New families who settled around the Riekes brought children of their own. Many of these young people became Glenn’s playmates.

The children would play when their parents met during regular Sunday events called “socials.” The gatherings were informal chances to swap gossip and share tasty treats. “All the neighbors would bring a can of something they had made,” Glenn remembered. “My mother always made a freezer of ice cream to take along.”

At one social, Glenn received an introduction to a new treat. “I saw ice cream served in a cone for the first time,” he said. “But I remember distinctly that I didn’t like the ice cream they served in the cone. I liked mother’s ice cream best!”

The difference, Glenn explained, began in the cream. Unrefrigerated milk on the prairie turned sour in a very short time. Most homesteaders didn’t bother to rush the production process, so their ice cream came from sour cream. Mary, though, organized her process to ensure that only sweet cream went into her churn. It made a difference, as Glenn could attest. “Mother’s ice cream just tasted so much better!” he said.

On Sundays that didn’t host a social, the Riekes might hitch their horses to a rig for the four mile trip to Uncle Fred and Aunt Louise’s home. “The incline was quite high up the Eight Mile Bench,” remembered Glenn. “You had to take a circular road to get up there. Coming down, it was necessary to apply brakes to the rim of the wheel the whole time.”

War rumbles in Europe

The year 1914 produced an event of world-shattering significance.

On June 28, a Serbian upset with Austria’s rule over Bosnia assassinated Austrian Archduke Francis Ferdinand and his wife. Immediately, European countries that had been forming alliances and rattling swords for 30 years rushed into battle.

Like dominoes, the events which led to the first world war began to tumble.

One particular trip inflicted a painful memory. “Our buckboard buggy had a dashboard that you set behind and drove the horses,” Glenn explained. “Dad was driving and hit a chuckhole. I slipped down and hit my mouth on that dashboard. The impact laid open my lower lip and pretty near cut it off!”

Still, pleasure outweighed pain on the Montana social scene. On summer holidays such as the Fourth of July, the Rieke family took the buckboard to the Missouri River where they met other homesteaders for a picnic.

Whether at work or play, life on the homestead was spartan and harsh. Glenn shook his head at the different impressions he and his father must have taken away from these years. While the boy found pure pleasure in the simple, every day life on the farm, his father struggled under the worry and responsibility of providing for a growing family in an inhospitable land. TW’s shoulders must have sagged many times.

* * *

When crops were good those first few years, homestead farmers pooled their energies and resources to gather their yield. “In those days, you harvested wheat and put it up in shocks,” said Glenn. “Then you'd throw the shocks on a wagon by hand and bring them to the threshing machine.”

Since no one farmer could afford the machinery, a group of men and cooperatively-owned machines would travel from farm to farm. At each site, the men set up a big old Case steam engine and threshing machine. The threshing machine was attached to the engine by an 8-inch wide belt that could be 50 feet long.

The arrangement seems primitive today, but at the time it rode the wave of emerging mechanical farm technology. The arrival of oversized tractors marked the birth of vast-acre farms. Numerous fields for the first time could be tamed by a few men. Mechanization heralded the end of the small family farms on the prairie.

Too young to work in the field during harvest, Glenn kept busy with go-for chores. "I had to bring drinking water out to the men," he said. "And I'd bring them sandwiches and stuff."

On one harvest day, Glenn was given an emergency errand. TW and Irvin were helping thresh grain on the Lidstone farm about two miles from the Rieke homestead. A big hill separated the two farms. This particular day, Glenn had stayed home to help his mother. "She had some cooking going in the kitchen on the woodburning stove," said Glenn. "Where the pipe went through, the wall caught fire. Soon the kitchen was burning!" Glenn and his mother were working outside when Mary noticed the smoke. Before she ran toward the house, Mary turned to Glenn and simply said, "Go get Dad!"

Over two uphill miles the boy ran, the sight of the smoking house pushing him faster. "When I got to the neighbor's field, I was exhausted," said Glenn. After he was able to gasp out his message, he found himself abandoned. "They ran back themselves—that's the only transportation we had!" Glenn said. "But I couldn't stay with them, I was all wore out."

Luckily, Mary had been able to put the fire out with buckets of water. The emergency ended before the men arrived. "I got back probably 15 minutes after the excitement was over," said Glenn. "By then, they were having a drink of coffee."

* * *

Fall also brought the butchering season. Prairie farmers set several days aside to kill and clean the animals which would provide meat during the winter.

Glenn recalled one butchering season which—by his own actions—sticks out in his mind. "Not having anything to do, I was running around the barn we built out of mud," he said, setting the scene. "At one corner, in front of the barn, was a post about eight inches around. I don't know what the post was for—a place to tie horses or something."

As regular as the seasons, TW liked to make blood pudding sausage from butchering's by-products. "When he cut the throats of the hogs, he would catch the blood in a dish pan," explained Glenn. "He wanted the blood to set and curdle—get a little thick. So he put this pan full of blood on top of that post."

On a fateful round of his exercise regimen, Glenn upset TW's plans. "I cut the corner too sharp and hit that post, upsetting the pan on the ground," he said. When Glenn glanced at his father, he saw an expression he'd never seen before. "I thought Dad was going to hit me, he was so riled up!" Glenn said. "He picked up a big tug off a harness and started after me."

Mary stood near the house, about 100 feet away, working in the garden. "I run up and hid behind her skirts," Glenn recalled. TW followed, but Mary prevented any further bloodletting.

Glenn laughed. "That's the closest I ever got to getting a spanking!"

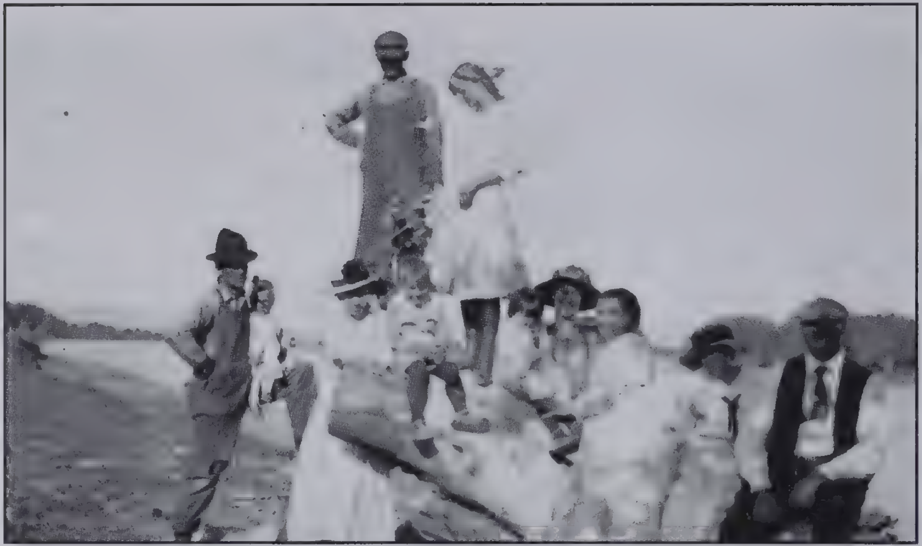
* * *

In ageless rhythm, winter followed fall. Beginning in 1910, the Riekes spent the cold months above ground in their new wood frame house. Despite the new shelter, cold weather remained the family's constant enemy.

"It was just a board-frame house, not insulated at all like the houses today," said Glenn. "We lived in that house in winter weather of 40 degrees below zero. It got so cold, one night we forgot to bring in a can of kerosene from the porch. The next morning, it was frozen solid!"

The only heat inside the house came from two kitchen appliances: a potbellied stove and cook stove. "Most of the winter we lived right in the kitchen," Glenn said. What heat escaped from the kitchen was all that provided comfort in the rest of the house. As a result, the upstairs bedrooms grew especially chilly. Sleeping arrangements provided some warmth. Ruth slept alone in one bedroom. TW and Mary shared a bed in the other. In the third bedroom, Glenn and his two brothers occupied a single bed. Body heat alone, though, didn't provide enough comfort. "Imagine when temperatures would get down 30 to 40 below zero!" said Glenn. "You had to crawl under heavy blankets in order to keep warm!"

The family used homespun remedies to cope with the cold. "Each one of us had a pet rock," Glenn explained. "We'd pile these behind the cook stove on a rack during the day. When night come, the rocks had accumulated quite a bit of heat. So the last thing you'd do before going to bed was to get your rock, carry it up to your bed, and put it under the covers to help keep you warm."



This group of homesteaders gathered at the Missouri River for a summer holiday. Irvin stands at center next to Ruth, who playfully touches Mary's hat with a stick. Glenn from his seat on the log looks intently at the camera. Mildred (Lehfeldt) Hoge sits to Glenn's left. The baby in the arms of the man at the far left appears to be Mahlon. Hans Lehfeldt sits at far right and TW, third from right, leans against the log The river provided homesteaders with transportation and a very limited supply of wood for building (note the trees in the background).

The Rieke children appear ready for an outing in one of the rare photos taken on their Montana homestead. Glenn's hair, though a little wild in front, is neatly parted while Ruth, left, wears a wide-brimmed summer hat. Mahlon, being held by Ruth, appears to be wearing leggings and short pants. Only Mary, right, looks dressed for work. In the original photo, the ribs of both horses—that's Ted on the left and Buster on the right— can clearly be seen.

As children will, Glenn found creative ways to steal some extra warmth. "There was a stairway and all the heat went through that opening to the upstairs," he said. "Right over the ceiling of the kitchen was the warmest part of the house." Glenn liked to sit in the warm area. This habit left him with one vivid memory. "I was the last one going upstairs one night. I got to the top of the stairway, where it was nice and warm. For some reason I just laid my rock down, stretched out there on the stairs and went to sleep," he said.

During the night, Mary woke up and looked in the boy's bedroom. Glenn wasn't there. A little worried, Mary started downstairs. "That's when she saw me lying on the top step," said Glenn. "So she woke me up and got me in bed."

* * *

Winter days on the homestead seemed long and empty. With no television, radio or phone, prairie homesteaders faced fate alone. Only a few chores required attention and, when those were complete, the family huddled together near the cookstove. Mary whiled the winter away sewing and darning clothing. TW and Irvin spent the time fixing equipment and planning their attack once the weather turned warmer.

Because of his young age, Glenn spent most of his winter days helping his mother "One of my jobs during the long winter days was to card wool for Mother.," Glenn said. "She would spin it into thread on her spinning wheel. Then for hours she would knit socks and sweaters for the entire family."

On other days, Mary might add to the family's supply of candles, which she made from tallow fat. "She had little forms that she put a string into," Glenn explained. "Then she'd fill the forms with liquid tallow."

Like all homesteaders, the Riekes were forced to be self-sufficient. "You didn't shop like you do today," Glenn explained. "We'd go to Big Sandy once or twice a year to get supplies. Before winter time, you'd get your winter grubsteak—flour, sugar and coffee, those kind of staples. In the spring of the year, you'd get new supplies–seed and stuff to plant your crops. For any additional supplies, the family relied on Sears and the U.S. Postal Service.

Filled with pictures of products aimed specifically at America's large rural community, the Sears catalog held a central position in homesteaders' lives. "We always looked forward to the new one," Glenn recalled. "I guess it's because it had everything in it that we did not have." Following tradition, when the new catalog arrive, the Riekes retired its predecessor to the outhouse.

At times when he had nothing better to do, Glenn thumbed through the catalog for entertainment. He pointed out that this recreational reading took part almost exclusively during the day. "There was no electricity so it was difficult to do any reading at nighttime," Glenn noted. "It was a very simple life. By the time the sun went down, we were ready to go to bed."

The long, cold winters were just one more hard fact connected to life on the Montana prairie. Homesteaders dealt with adverse weather with the same resolve they used against other hardships. Glenn summed up the philosophy of battling low temperatures this way: "You put your heavy clothes on and you took it."

Christmas visited the prairie

Christmas provided a welcome diversion for homesteaders during the cold months.

"Dad would go out down along the Missouri River and cut a little pine tree," remembered Glenn. "We had no electric lights at that time, so we set candles on the limbs and lit them." He chuckled. "It was dangerous as hell!"

The Sears catalog received more attention than usual at Christmas time, but all of the family's decorations and gifts came from items at hand. TW showed the children how to make their own gifts. "We'd have mother save all her thread spools," Glenn said. "Those spools ended up as wheels on wagons and so forth. That was the toys we got for Christmas."

Despite the frugal times, Christmas dinner provided a special treat. "Mother would be working all day long in the kitchen, cooking a big meal," Glenn recalled. "We'd usually have chicken or something like that."

* * *

In some variation of the above descriptions, Glenn spent his first five years of life. The time period coincided with the Montana homestead heydays. Unfortunately, by the time Glenn celebrated his eighth birthday, he would be witness to the end of the homestead era in the Big Sandy area.

HARD LESSONS

Chapter Four

Despite its ultimate failure, the homestead farm provided the Rieke family with valuable life lessons. The men—most notably TW, Irvin and Glenn—throughout their lives regarded those years as defining. The homestead defined their endurance, their limits of suffering, their toughness, their response to adversity, their capacity for work, their method of dealing with disappointment and their willingness to follow a dream.

Unfortunately, all lessons were learned the hard way.

* * *

The harvest of 1916 marked the homesteading zenith. On Nov. 16 of that Fall, 286 wagons lined up to unload wheat at the Big Sandy elevators. A bumper crop coincided with sky-high prices brought on by the World War that raged over in Europe. Each bushel sold for a whopping $1.84.

The Rieke family had further reason to celebrate. Just before taking their record harvest to town, on September 6, Mahlon Edwin Rieke was born in the homestead house.

With a growing family, the Riekes

put money from the early success to work "Dad bought a an old Mogull Tractor with a two-cylinder gasoline engine," Glenn recalled. "That was the only power he had, other than horse power."

Prairie sick days

TW would soon learn that, out on the lonesome prairie, horses had one distinct advantage over his new Mogull tractor: If hurt, they could heal themselves.

Glenn chuckled. "In my recollection, the tractor was out commission most of the time!" he said.

Success in the fields improved life off the farm as well. Big Sandy-area homesteaders pooled their resources to build a one-room, 20-by-30 foot schoolhouse in Iliad, a small town where the Hans Lehfeldt family lived, about four miles from the Rieke homestead. Irvin and Ruth rode one of the old farm horses to attend.

Irvin would make quite a name for himself in the school—but not one in which his parents took pride.

The first-year teacher was not much older than the students and could ride a horse like a homesteader. The students liked her.

Before the second year began, however, the popular teacher was replaced by an old, stern taskmaster with a sour disposition. "The lady teacher had a buckboard and horse she rode to school every day," Glenn explained. "She insisted the boys take care of her horse. They had to take the harness off and feed him, whether it was raining or shining." The students didn't like the chores or the old battle-ax who ordered them. The older boys in particular took pleasure in playing tricks on their new educator.

One morning the teacher arrived at school on foot and in a huff. She promptly expelled three boys, including Irvin. More than 60 years later, in an article appearing in the Great Falls Tribune, one of the younger boys who witnessed the events—Adolph Sevick—revealed the truth: the boys had placed some "hokie-pokie" under the horses tail, prompting him to run away and damage the buggy.

Sevick didn't name Irvin, but he might as well have when he said one of the perpetrators is "now a millionaire living in Billings."

Because of his age, Glenn never got to attend school while the family lived in Montana. At home, he received loving, if sporadic, instruction from his mother. The Lutheran minister's daughter brought her own old-world upbringing to the lessons. For example, she only taught Glenn to say the ABCs in German.

TW also had a hand in his son's education, but his practical lessons took place outdoors. "In 1917, Dad put in a wheat field and marked off one acre of it," said Glenn. "He said I could have the income off that area."

Glenn checked on the wheat each day. As the grain grew, so did his hopes.

The lesson turned out to be a perfect illustration of homestead farming, Glenn said with a chuckle. "The wheat come up pretty good. Then one day, grasshoppers moved in and cleaned that wheat field right off. It wasn't worth anything!"

* * *

Prairie farmers lived with the constant threat that acts of Nature or freak accidents would jar their precarious lives. On a harvest trip to town, Irvin learned how quickly scars originate.

"They were going to town with a load of wheat," said Glenn. "My cousin Leonard Rathert, a young boy at the time, was along. Irvin had a .22-caliber rifle and Leonard had been walking alongside the wagon shooting rabbits and things with this gun."

When Leonard finished his target practice, he handed the gun to Irvin, barrel first. Irvin asked if the gun was loaded and Leonard answered no. "It was just a light gun and Irvin grabbed the barrel with his thumb on the end of it.," Glenn said. "He was going to shove it up into this bed of wheat."

As Irvin pushed forward, the gun's trigger caught on the wagon's side board of the wagon and the weapon went off. "Leonard apparently had a bullet in the chamber when he shouldn't have," said Glenn. "The bullet went through Irvin's thumb, where his fingernail was. He was just lucky it passed over his shoulder!"

Despite immediate pain, Irvin wasn't seriously damaged over the long run. "His thumb nail never grew back, but it didn't bother him," Glenn reported.

* * *

After 1916, harvest time became painful for Montana homesteaders. The bumper crop grew in a year when 15.26 inches of rain fell. The next year, 1917, the yearly total of rainfall dropped to 9.96 inches.

Despite the setback, homesteaders around Big Sandy didn't panic. They viewed the drought as a short-term handicap. To hedge their bets, though, they began to invest sweat in plans and projects that would help them deal with a shortage of water.

TW's plan led to another freak accident. Irvin was again involved—this time as the cause.

"One of the requirements of the Homestead Act was that whoever signed up had to do a certain amount of improvement work on their plot of land," explained Glenn. "They had, let's say ten years, to make those improvements." One requirement by the government decreed that homesteaders on the semi-arid prairie had to build a dam to store water for their animals and livestock. The intent of the law made sense. "When it did rain in Montana, they have what's called a cloudburst. Clouds drop two or three inches of water at one time," said Glenn. "Then the land won't see another rain for a month or two. So the homesteaders wanted to catch that water."

TW and Irvin built the Rieke dam in the dry year of 1917. Six-year-old Glenn was a faithful spectator. An arroyo, or gully washed out by the rain, ran near the homestead. It measured approximately 50 feet across and 20 feet in depth. "Dad built an earthen dam across this arroyo," said Glenn. "The dam was wide enough on top to have a road across it—that shows how much dirt they moved. I'd say the top of the dam was 75 feet across and had a depth of 25 feet."

TW and Irvin used a device similar to a "slip scraper" to move the earth. The mechanical contraption featured two handles and a large bucket with a flat edge for cutting into the earth. An operator held the handles while a team of horses or tractor provided forward motion. As the device moved, the operator raised the handles up, which pointed the front scoop into the ground. When the bucket filled with top soil, the operator pushed the handles down and the front end came out of the ground. The load could then be removed and dumped.

"Instead of a single slip scraper, Dad got what they called a Fresno, which was bigger," Glenn explained. "It was about five feet wide and was held onto the tractor by two chains, one on each side. It would hold pretty near half a yard of dirt at one time. It had big. long handles for more leverage."

One day, Glenn watched as Irvin drove the Mogul tractor and TW followed behind, holding onto the Fresno. The back-and-forth work of getting a load and dumping it grew wearily monotonous. "After doing this all day long, Irvin would get sleepy," said Glenn. "The motions were all mechanical to him. He'd run back and forth in the same tracks, doing the same motions."

The teenager picked a bad time to fall asleep at the wheel. "Well, they run into a rock," Glenn said. "The Fresno immediately stopped. Dad tried to hold it down, but Irvin was half asleep. So the tractor just kept going and going. That Fresno flipped and tossed Dad up in the air about ten feet. When he come down, he landed on his wrist and busted both bones."

What could a homesteader do in such an emergency? The Fort Benton Hospital was 60 miles away. Even what medical help Big Sandy might offer wouldn't be much use after 38 miles on horseback.

Viewing his options, TW decided to follow the homesteader's creed of self reliance. He set the bones himself. Glenn recalled that many homestead families owned a big medical reference book which came quickly off the shelf in such cases. "Dad just felt the bones until he got them straight," said Glenn. "Then he put boards on top and bottom and wrapped the two together."

Glenn, who 45 years after the incident would help provide DeKalb County, Indiana, with a much-needed hospital, concluded the story with his tongue-in-cheek. "You don't need all this medical stuff we got today," he said with a smile.

* * *

The dam and TW's accident serve as apt symbols of the homesteaders' struggle. Through a man-made plan, TW intended to direct the course of Nature. He accomplished his plan through a monumental amount of work. Even TW's will of iron, however, could not overcome the fragility of the system. In the end, Nature always had her way.

It didn't rain often on the Montana prairie, but when it did, water fell in sheets. The parched ground couldn't slurp the water quickly enough, so flash floods ran across the surface like hungry wolves.

TW had prepared the dam for such an assault. He installed a pipe in the bottom and equipped it with a valve. If pressure built too high, he could open the valve and let water out of the dam.

Even these best laid plans weren't enough. Not long after TW and Irvin finished the dam, flash floods dashed over the area. In a matter of minutes, the dirt monument to all their work washed away.

The loss of the dam was discouraging, devastating, frustrating. Still, it represented only a primer lesson in homestead heartbreak when compared to what followed.

In November of 1917, TW and his family began the yearly ritual of butchering. Winter would soon arrive. Snow already covered the ground.

In contrast to the weather outside, the tiny kitchen seemed like a warm beehive of activity. After TW sacrificed a hog, he'd bring sections of the carcass inside and place them in a boiling-hot solution of lye water, kept in an oblong copper tub. The lye loosened the animal's hide and hair, which then could be removed easily from the meat. Nothing would be wasted. The meat became hams, bacon, chops and sausage. The skin would be cut into small pieces and fried to make cracklings.

The lye tub on this day had been shoved under the cook range, but a fair-sized opening to the boiling solution stuck into the kitchen. As TW did the dirty work of butchering, Irvin and Ruth made sausage. Using a grinder clamped onto the kitchen table, they turned a handle to grind fresh pork. Due to the lack of space, the table butted up against the cook stove.

Glenn picked up the story: "Little brother Warren was about 2 1/2 years old at the time. He come around the table where Brother Irvin and Sister Ruth were grinding away. As my little brother worked his way behind Irvin, trying to get through, he backed up against the tub and fell in."

Warren's body was submerged in the lye solution from his knees to his chest. He tried to straighten up, but his struggles only wedged him in tighter. "Irvin really had to pull to get him out," said Glenn. The lye did its predictable work. The family watched in horror as the young boy's skin seemed to fall off him.

TW frantically searched through the medical book. Its advice for severe burns: cover the skin with grease or oil. "So Dad covered the boy's body with white hog lard," said Glenn.

The boy was too badly burned. Home remedies would not be enough to meet the emergency. "Dad hitched his team of horses to the wagon, put some straw in the bed along with a blanket. Mother got in there with the little boy," Glenn said. Mary, TW and Warren left the homestead about 6 p.m. They stopped only to pick up Henry Rathert. The worried parents then began the painfully slow, 38 mile trek to Big Sandy.

"There was one house between our place and town called the 'Halfway House,'" said Glenn. "When they got there about midnight, the boy was unconscious. They decided he wouldn't survive the rest of the trip—another 15 or 20 miles—so Dad unhitched the team and Henry rode bareback into town."

Henry hustled back leading a doctor in a horse and buggy. They arrived at the Halfway House about 7 a.m. In ending the story, Glenn—80 years after the incident—had to pause a moment. His voice broke as he said, "The boy had died about two hours before!"

TW built a casket out of leftover boards. He dug a small hole on a hill near the homestead. A few neighbors and the extended Rieke clan gathered for the funeral.

No minister lived in the area—in truth, there was no church—so TW said a few words. Glenn remembered the day well. His mother, a strong woman who rarely bent under the prairie's frequent blows, cried.

A turning point had been reached. The prairie could have the dream, the hopes, the sweat, the crops, the dam.

But a child, too?

"That tragedy really broke up my mother and father," said Glenn.

Glenn took this picture of the "Halfway House" in 1967.

As 1918 began, the outlook from the Rieke's Montana homestead was not very happy. Far away in Europe but close to their thoughts, America fought in a great war seemingly intent on destroying the world's young men and resources. On Paradise Prairie, the previous year's crop had failed, depleting area farmers already meager financial resources. And just beyond the family's own farmyard, on a barren hill, stood a lonely cross that reminded them of their recent traumatic loss

Nature doesn't show mercy nor concern itself with hurting human hearts. Once again it withheld rain through spring, summer and fall. There

In 1978, as Glenn photographs the moment, Irvin points to a depression in the earth where Warren's casket once rested. The family later moved the boy's body to Auburn. The "Eight Mile Bench," where the Fred Rolf family lived, can be seen in the background.

would be no crops a second year.

The Riekes took stock. They were out of money, out of determination, out of hope. Only one thread tied them to the homestead ground. Mary asked TW to promise that they would not leave Warren's body in that god-forsaken ground any longer than necessary. With his promise, the family decided to go back to Chicago.

Even after the return to Chicago, TW couldn't give up his homestead dream. In the spring of 1919 he sent Irvin back to put in a crop.

Just to see.

That fall, the entire family once again rode the Great Northern Railway to Big Sandy. They took the familiar trail to the old homestead. TW looked once more at the fields that had held so much promise.

What he saw closed the book for good on the Rieke family's homestead days. "Let's go home," he said.

From 1910 through 1916, Montana farmers could expect to average 25 bushels of wheat per acre. In 1919, Montana farmland produced an average of only 2.4 bushels per acre. Not long after the Riekes left, their neighbors began a mass exodus from the land.

The homestead days of Montana's Paradise Prairie had ended.

* * *

Glenn was born the year the homestead rush into Montana began in earnest. He left as the homestead movement turned to dust. In between, he saw a lot of life and death. He learned valuable lessons and experienced fate's harsh hand.

All of this intense education took place in a few short years. About the time his family decided to head back east, Glenn turned seven years old.

High prices didn't help homesteaders

Herbert Hoover became an American presidential contender through his efforts during World War I.

Already a famous humanitarian, Hoover was chosen to head the "Food Administration," one of six boards that reported directly to President Woodrow Wilson. To "Hooverize" meant saving food through cleaning your plate or observing meatless and wheatless days. To boost production, Hoover raised wheat prices. Ironically for the Riekes, this move helped American farmers virtually everywhere but in the drought-stricken northwestern prairie.

JOURNEY OUT

Chapter Five

Once the Rieke family made the decision to leave Montana, they faced familiar questions. What should they keep from their old life? What should they leave behind?

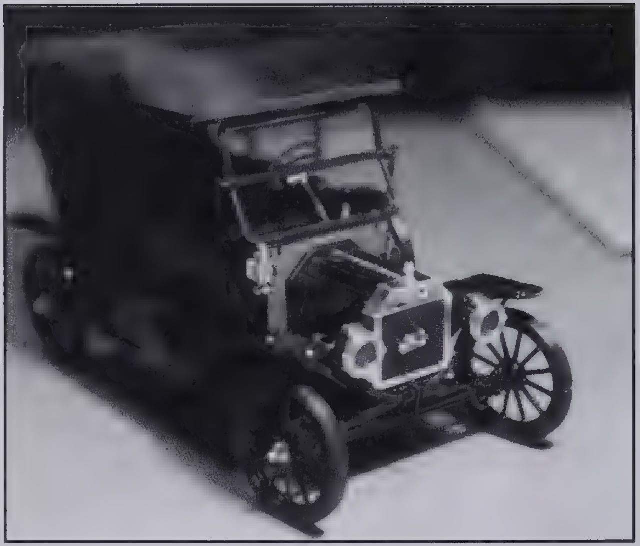
This time, decisions came easier.

First of all, there wasn't much in the way of material means to consider. The homestead's frame house, sod barn, summer kitchen, and plowed fields could not be moved. Without the land, the family wouldn't need farm equipment, nor livestock. Those could be sold.

When many of the reminders of the past nine years of backbreaking effort had been liquidated, TW traded his team of work horses for a 1913 Model T Ford. The transaction proved symbolic on several levels. It represented a transformation from farm to urban life; more significantly, it represented the changing times.

In 1903, the Ford Motor Co., incorporated in the state of Michigan with $100,000 in capital. The first Model T appeared in 1908. When Ford adopted mass-production assembly line techniques in 1913—thereby allowing him to undercut competitors' prices—the Model

T became ubiquitous. In 1919, the company reorganized to the tune of $100,000,000. The gist of the numbers add up to this: the mass manufactured Model T, priced within reach of the average working man, changed the face of American society. The technological innovations, falling prices, impact on accepted ways of thinking, and sheer excitement which accompanied the emergence of the affordable automobile could be compared to the current computer craze.



Glenn kept this scaled-down version of a 1913 Model T Ford in his office to remind him of the trip out of Montana.

The exact deal TW made for the Rieke's first car is unknown. In Big Sandy in 1915, a brand new Model T Runabout sold for $390. Bought in 1918, the Riekes' used, 5-year-old Flivver would have been worth considerably less. Plus, the original owner seemed motivated to deal. According to Glenn, while trying to crank-start the car, the man broke his arm and decided he'd had enough of the new fangled contraption.

After their several sales and trades were completed, all that remained of the Rieke farm household were pots, pans and clothing. TW strapped these onto the Model T's expandable racks and running boards. "We looked like a bunch of Oakies traveling across country," said Glenn with a chuckle.

When it was time to go, Mary and TW slipped into the front seats. Mahlon, only two years old at the time, sat on his mother's lap. Glenn, Irvin and Ruth shared the back seat.

The Rieke homestead era ended with little ceremony. There were no papers to sign, no realtors to consult. By leaving, the family simply relinquished their claim to the land and it went back into the possession of the U.S. government.

Only one expression of regret marked the departure. Mary again cried, for she couldn't bear the thought of leaving Warren behind. TW repeated his promise to relocate the boy's body once the family settled.

With that, the Riekes putt-putted away.

From the back seat, Glenn took one last glance at three perplexed geese. "An old sheepherder had come along one day and gave me three gosling geese," said Glenn in explanation. "They were just babies when I got them, but they grew up to be great big."

The geese grew plumper the day before the Riekes moved, much to the family's dismay. The Model T sported a

Glenn takes the forefront in this photo, shot around the time the Riekes left their Montana homestead. The 1913 Model T Ford in which they would make their escape is seen in the background (one of the Eisen glass side windows appears in the upper right). Glenn posed with his big sister Ruth, who holds Mahlon's hand. Mildred Lehfeldt (now Mildred Hoge) peeks over Glenn's shoulder. The presence of a big tree suggests that the photo was taken near the Missouri River, and confirms that it was not taken near the Rieke home.

soft, flexible top which could be folded down in pleasant weather. During colder months when the top came up, passengers in the back seat could look through windows made of a flexible, transparent material known as Eisen glass.

The Eisen glass in the used automobile had become cracked and broken. During preparations for the move, TW ordered replacements through the Sears & Roebuck catalog.

The night before the family left, Mary used her old, hand-pump sewing machine to sew new Eisen glass into the frames for the side curtains. At supper time, TW took the refurbished curtains outside, laid them on the ground, and washed them. The curtains remained there to dry while the family went inside to eat.

Unfortunately, the Riekes weren't the only ones hungry. When the family came back outside, they discovered Glenn's geese had eaten the Eisen glass out of the windows!

Glenn laughed retelling the story, but at the time, he said, his parents were not amused.

Mary quickly improvised. She scrounged up old, black cloth, cut it into strips and sewed it into the openings where the windows had been.

As the car pulled away from the farm, discussion could have touched on past struggles, the lost hope, even the road ahead. Instead, it centered on Glenn's well-fed geese. The little boy asked his father, "What about my geese?"

TW curtly replied: "We're going to leave the goddamn things here and let the coyotes eat them."

* * *

As the Riekes left their homestead, an ocean away, the World War ground to a bloody close.

In late September, American veterans returning from overseas brought with them a new strain of flu, then commonly known by the full term "influenza." Undeterred by medical technology of the time, the disease weakened a victim's body, leaving the door open to more serious infections. Deaths due to the flu rose to epidemic proportions.

Despite frantic efforts to contain it, the flu spread like wildfire. Newspapers across the country tracked the disease as it stepped west. First cases were reported in Buffalo, then Cleveland, then Detroit.

Flu was war's great Grim Reaper

The first world war extracted a heavy human toll. Altogether, almost six million combatants died. The United States contributed 81,500 of that total.

Sadly, America would lose six times as many civilians as soldiers as an indirect result of the war—the 1918 influenza epidemic.

With their Model T pointed east, the Riekes were heading straight toward one of the greatest killers in world history.

* * *

Like winding up a mechanical toy, the first leg of the Riekes' trip actually took the family further west.

The Riekes left the homestead October 10, 1918. They followed the Missouri River to arrive October 11 at Great Falls, Montana.

According to plan, TW took a temporary job to earn enough money to finance the eastward trek. The family rented a room in Great Falls for two weeks. TW worked in the town's railroad roundhouse long enough to receive two paychecks. Then, about October 26, the longest part of the journey began.

At this latitude, fall rushed into winter. "The weather was bad," Glenn remembered. "It was cold. The ground was wet and mushy. They called it 'gumbo' when it got wet. It was like clay sticking to your feet!"

The roads succumbed quickly to the conditions. "There were just country-style roads made over the prairie, no gravel even, and they were all cut up with ruts," said Glenn. "We'd ride in the fields, which were smoother. I don't

Airplanes emerge from war cloud

As history repeatedly reveals, war prompts technological advances. One positive outcome of World War I was the rapid development of airplanes.

When the conflict began, heavier-than-air craft had a range of about 200 miles and flew at speeds of up to 70 miles per hour. Armies used "aeroplanes" almost exclusively to scout enemy movement. On occasion during combat situations, rival pilots would become aggressive and shoot handguns at each other.

By the end of the war, however, airplanes were being used as offensive fighting weapons. Dutch inventor Anthony Fokker made it possible to fire a machine gun through an airplane's revolving propeller, paving the way for fighter planes. About the same time, pilots began to throw bombs from airplanes. By the end of the war, mechanical bomb-delivery systems had been added to planes, effectively creating the first bombers.

Finally, a heavy dose of war-time PR pushed airplane technology ahead. The world had only begun to accept that man could reliably fly when astounding reports of airplane speed and load capacity arrived from the front. In a time when war still had a dash of romance, the exploits of air legends such as America's Eddie Rickenbacker and Germany's greatly feared Red Baron captured imaginations.

how the hell the old Ford got through it!"

It barely did. On a daily basis, the Tin Lizzy needed help. "The old Ford used gravity feed to get gasoline from the tank under the front seat to the motor," said Glenn. "If you come to a hill of any kind, the motor run out of fuel and sputtered and quit. So Dad would turn around and back up hills. It seemed to me like we backed up half the way to Minneapolis!"

The constant strain on the engine tasked the car's cooling system. "The Ford was forever running out of water," Glenn recalled. "My job was to take the coffee pot and run down to a stream or water hole to get water to put in the radiator." The temperature pendulum also could swing the other way. "We had to keep blankets over the front end to keep the radiator from freezing," said Glenn. "If it was a question of having the radiator freeze or boil over, it was better to have it boil over!"

The biggest automotive problem to overcome, however, centered on where the rubber met the prairie. "We continually had flat tires," Glenn said. "Dad scrounged up tires wherever he could. If we could buy two or three tires at a time, we'd get them, but often before we'd run the day out, they'd be shot."

Stuck out in the middle of the prairie with no tires, TW improvised. "Many times we had to cut barbed wire off fences and wrap it around flat tires to keep them on the rims," said Glenn. "We didn't want to ruin the rims before we could find another tire."

TW tried several solutions to the tire problem. At one town, he bought a hot patch kit, hoping to make on-the-spot repairs.

Once again, though, Glenn's need for exercise upset his father's plans. "It was cold one day and I was running around the car trying to keep warm," said Glenn, picking up the story. "In order to put on a hot patch, you'd take the tube out of the tire and heat it over a little Bunsen burner. The burner would melt the rubber patch onto the inner tube and seal the leak. Dad set the tire on the ground with the Bunsen burner underneath."

Everything went well until, on one of his laps, Glenn ran too close to the machine and knocked it over. The family could only watch as the precious inner tube caught fire and burned.

"My name was Mud that day!" Glenn said with a laugh. "We had to wire the old tube onto the rim of the wheel. From there we hobbled into the next place where we could buy another tire."

* * *

The Model T bumped along day after day, through the last week of October, the first week of November, and into the second week of November.

Where days proved monotonous, each night provided a new adventure. "We stayed in every conceivable place!" Glenn said. "Several nights we slept right out on the fields, alongside the road. If there was brush or a tree, we slept under it—any place we could get a little shelter. A night or two we slept in the car, if it was raining."

Along the way, the family came across a deserted log cabin. "We stopped and went in out of the weather because it was snowing," said Glenn. "The cabin had plank bunks around the walls to sleep on. No heat. The chinking had come out and the snow had beaten in. You could see right through the log walls!"

Glenn slept on one of the bunks under a pile of blankets. Snow continued to fall throughout the night and the boy awoke to a strange sensation. "There was at least two inches of snow on top of me in the morning!" Glenn said, laughing. "But I slept through it. When you're young, you can take a lot."

The family did what they could for comfort. "Dad chopped firewood and built a fire outside to warm ourselves up the next morning," said Glenn. "But you don't warm yourself very much with snow on the ground."

The chill wouldn't go away. Glenn remembered feeling wet and cold much of the trip.

Under these health-trying conditions, the family watched the flu epidemic charge towards them. "After we started out from Great Falls, we'd pick up a newspaper wherever we could and see the flu had moved farther and farther west," said Glenn. "Everybody was dying and we were heading into it!"

Finally, at Fargo, North Dakota, the eastbound Riekes met the westbound epidemic. "I saw a farmer and his wife riding on their wagon behind a team of horses, carrying their dead out to bury them," said Glenn. "They couldn't get an undertaker because the undertakers were scared of contracting the disease! Doctors wouldn't call on patients who had the flu. Nobody would talk to them."

Doctors knew the infection was being spread by microscopic germs, so they spread the word to avoid contact with someone who might be sick. Schools closed. Business meetings and social gatherings were cancelled. Public transportation came to a stop.

Fear tightened its grip. "Everybody in town wore masks over their faces," Glenn remembered. "There wasn't a room available to rent. The hotels had all been turned into hospitals."

In the country, farm folk grew wary to the point of paranoia when encountering travelers. One cold, snowy night, the Riekes pulled up to a farmhouse with a light on inside. The farmer opened an upstairs window and asked, "What do you want?" TW answered, "A place to sleep." The farmer said, "Well, you understand we can't let you in our house, but you're

Traveling in a cold, dark, bumpy world

For Glenn, Ruth and Irvin, the trip away from the homestead took place in a cold, dark, bumpy compartment.

"The worst part of that trip, as far as I was concerned, was having to ride in the back seat with the side curtains covering the windows," Glenn said. "It was perfectly dark back there. We couldn't see much, except out front over our parents' shoulders. Whenever the weather did get warm enough, we'd open up a side curtain so we could get a little air, but usually those curtains had to be closed because of the temperature."

Glenn shook his head. "That's the way we traveled for 900 miles!"

welcome to sleep in the barn." "So we slept in the hayloft that night," said Glenn. "People felt for us, but they were afraid for themselves."

The story of the night in the barn ends with an example of the mixed feelings brought on by fear of the flu. "The next morning, God bless her, the old farm lady had a steaming hot breakfast setting on the window sill outside!" remembered Glenn.

Confronted with the flu's threat to their family, TW and Mary applied a home remedy to keep it away. "Dad went to a pharmacy and bought a gallon jug of mouthwash," Glenn recalled. "Every morning, regardless of where we was at, he'd line us up and we took turns gargling with that mouthwash."

Glenn noted that the family spent all their travel time out in the open air and had little contact with other people, so they were fairly protected from germs. Still, the homespun remedy may have helped turned the tide against wet, cold and infection. With obvious pride, Glenn said, "We came through the whole damn trip without a cold or sore throat!"

* * *

On November 10, 1918, the Riekes reached Minneapolis. They didn't know it, but the automobile portion of their trek was about to end with a bang.

"When we pulled into town, a streetcar hit us—the first streetcar I had ever seen!" said Glenn chuckling. "Nobody got hurt, but the accident demolished the rear end of the Ford, breaking the wheels."

He paused, then added,. "I can still see Mother's pots and pans and coffee pots rolling down the hill!"

Facing an unexpected crossroad, TW decided to splurge and rent a room. Despite the flu, the family found a hotel with available rooms in the heart of the city.

That night became etched in Glenn's memory. "Early in the morning, bells were ringing and there was noise out in the streets," he said. "We looked out and I saw people riding in bathtubs and every conveyance they could find being pulled behind automobiles. They were screaming and hollering. Being a young boy off the homestead, I thought all city people were crazy! I couldn't understand at all at the time."

The city slickers had good reason to lose their inhibitions. They had just learned the Armistice had been signed in a railroad car parked in the Forest of Compeigne, France.

The great war was over!

* * *

Relieved as the Riekes were about the war, they still faced a battle of their own.

It had been 32 days since they'd left the homestead. Despite all the obstacles they'd overcome, they stood 446 miles from their destination—and without a working vehicle!

Perhaps the end of the war had something to do with it; perhaps he got caught up in the feeling of liberation and the celebration of suffering coming to an end; whatever the reason, TW decided to bring his family's trip to a quick conclusion.

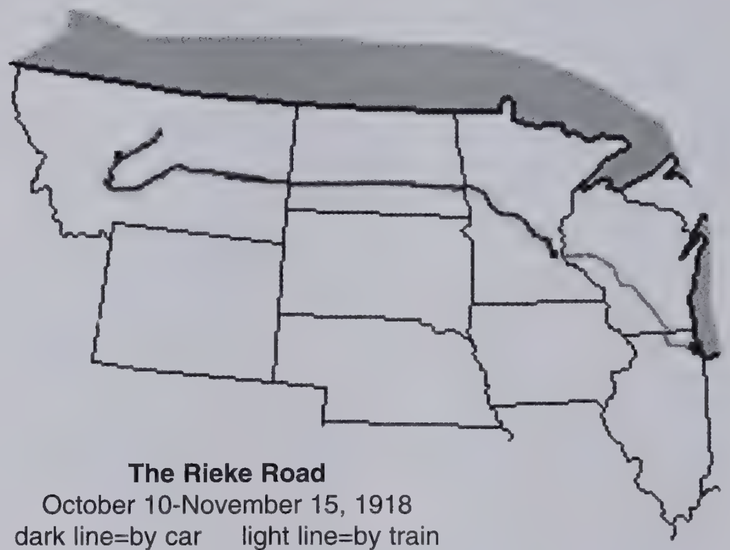
"Dad went to a garage to see what they could do about the Ford," said Glenn. "The car couldn't be fixed right away, so he decided to sell it. He made a deal with the garage man."

The sale of the loyal little car created a new problem, however. With the money, TW was able to buy only five train tickets to Chicago. Counting heads revealed the family needed six tickets for everyone to make the trip.

Irvin was a self reliant 17, a boy-man forged on the harsh Montana prairie. TW decided he could survive on his own. "So Dad got Irvin a job at the garage washing cars," said Glenn. "He told Irvin to accumulate enough money to buy a train ticket, then meet us in Chicago."

With that, TW, Mary, Ruth, Glenn and Mahlon went to the Minneapolis train station. Although anxious about Irvin, their hearts felt light. The great darkness of the war had been lifted. Their long journey would ride smooth rails to a quick close.

A new life lay just ahead.



The Rieke Road
October 10-November 15, 1918
dark line=by car light line=by train

TOUGH TIMES

Chapter Six

In leaving the Montana Homestead and coming back to bawdy, brawling Chicago, the Riekes traded one tough life for another.

The Riekes arrived in the city around Nov. 15, 1918. Their steam locomotive hissed to a stop in smoky Union Station (built in 1881, it would give way to the present behemoth namesake in 1925). Carrying all their worldly possessions, the family found a spot in the terminal and nestled in among pots, pans and clothing. Then TW took Glenn by the hand and said, "Let's go for a walk."

Father and son strode from the corner of Canal and Adams streets five blocks west and turned onto Halstead. Among the city's old retail section, TW stopped in front of a three-bell shop.

In other words, a pawn shop.

The family was again out of money. If TW couldn't rustle up at least a little cash, they would be nearly out of options.

What do you hock, though, when you've sold or left behind all but your most essential possessions?

"All Dad had was a gold watch his father brought over from Germany," said Glenn. The plain fact TW held onto the watch through the family's financial stresses spoke of its value to him. The fact that he was now willing to let it go spoke even louder on the family's limited options.

Glenn followed TW through the door and watched as his father laid the watch on the counter. "I'll give you two dollars and a pawn ticket," the clerk replied. "You've got thirty days to retrieve the watch. After that, if I can sell it, I will."

With money in their pocket, TW and Glenn looked for a place to stay that night. They found a room that rented for a $1 a day. After making necessary arrangements, they walked back to the train station to retrieve the rest of the family.

With evening coming on and one dollar to their name, the Rieke family carried all they owned to their temporary home.

That solved one immediate problem and left another.

What to eat?

Leaving the family once more, TW hit the street alone. Glenn clearly remembered his father's return. "He came back with a long loaf of bread, which he paid five cents for, and a bottle of ketchup," said Glenn. "He thought the ketchup would help wash the bread down."

Even in buying the meager meal, TW counted his pennies. He left enough change to buy a seat on the Lake Street elevated train. Early the next morning, TW took the train to Clearing, Illinois, home of the Benjamin Electric Company. Twelve years had passed since he last worked for the company.

The rest of the family passed an anxious day in their rented room. So much hinged on TW. He was playing the family's last card. Short term questions crowded out long-term concerns: Where would the family stay that evening? What would they eat? If they needed to raise more money, how would they do it?

Finally the family heard the heavy sounds of TW's return. The door opened and immediately their worries disappeared. TW entered the room smiling broadly. "His old boss had given him a week's paycheck in advance and a job," Glenn said, remembering the family's relief. "The next morning, he went to work!"

Despite the respite, the family couldn't rest. They next needed to find a permanent place to live. "We walked east from the railroad station and found a house with a 'For Rent' sign on the second floor," remembered Glenn. "The house sat near the corner of Washington Boulevard and California Avenue, one block off Lake Street where the el ran parallel to Washington."

To the eyes of a family fresh off the farm, the surroundings appeared dismal. Next to the house, on the southwest corner of the intersection, sat a two-story, stone apartment building called "Park Arms." A vacant lot nearby served as the neighborhood kids' ball diamond and playground. The people passing the house seemed dispirited. "The area was two-thirds Negro," said Glenn. "The landlady was a Negress. It was a very poor section of town."

The Riekes didn't know it at the time, but they had settled in a social tinderbox. In the euphoria following the Armistice, Chicago cheered returning black soldiers as well as white. But the welcome ended there. When commanders released white soldiers from parade marching formation, they joined the celebration milling about them. When black soldiers received release from marching formation, the crowd dispersed and the veterans traveled to much smaller celebrations attended by members of their race only.

After their release from active duty in the armed forces, blacks found their

Chicago welcome mat wearing thin. Nevertheless, many southern blacks liked the northern city and decided to stay. The area in which the men found homes lay like a belt across a southern portion of the city. Whites called it "Bronzeville."

Many whites resented the blacks' presence. One sympathetic observer who bucked the trend–Carl Sandberg, then working as a Daily News reporter–dug into the problem. He interviewed a white real estate broker who said, ".... I would say to the Negroes, 'We might as well be frank about it. You people are not admitted to our society' .... We are not making any threats, but we do say that something must be done."

In addition to battle fronts in their neighborhoods, discrimination in the workplace blocked blacks from all but the most menial jobs. To a group of people who had been given a small taste of American equality on European battlefields, the situation grew intolerable. In the hot summer of 1919, the tension boiled out of control.

* * *

As 1918 drew to a close, TW's steady employment and a new home eased the Rieke family's immediate concerns. Only one piece of the puzzle remained missing.

On a Sunday morning, probably Dec. 1, TW and Glenn took a walk. At the nearby intersection of Washington and Sacramento boulevards, they witnessed a historic and technological wonder—the City of Chicago's first stop-and-go light.

War ravages Riekes

Carl Rathert, Mary's younger brother and a Rieke family homestead helper, could be counted as a casualty of the World War.

"Carl was drafted and became a doughboy," Glenn explained. "He served in France with the troops in the trenches and got gassed."

Although just a young boy at the time, Glenn remembered Carl's return to Chicago after Rathert's overseas duty ended. "He stayed with us a few nights," said Glenn. "His lungs were shot. He had a hard time getting his breath, like a bad case of asthma."

Within a year of his return, Carl was dead.

"We went and marveled at the way people would pay attention to that light," explained Glenn. "They would go on the green and stop on the red! I don't know how long we stood there, but it was quite a while."

The entertainment value of a stop light may sound small to the television-and-computer generation, but the Riekes weren't alone in the their fascination. Glenn said quite a crowd gathered at the corner to watch the traffic flow.

Suddenly, in the milling herd, Glenn saw a sight that made his heart jump. "I happened to look and here, underneath the light, walking diagonally across the street right toward us, was Brother Irvin!"

Glenn shouted, "Dad, there's Irvin!" TW replied, "Well, I'll be goddamned."

As if keeping a scheduled appointment, Irvin walked right up to his father and brother. Even 80 years later, Glenn couldn't believe the coincidence. "Imagine something like that in the City of Chicago, even back in those days!" he said.

Irvin appreciated the irony. In a tape-recorded interview conducted by Glenn 69 years after the event, the older brother said, "If you hadn't been standing there, we probably wouldn't be together yet. How was ever I to know where to look for anyone in Chicago?"

To arrive at that corner at that precise moment capped an interesting journey for Irvin. It began when he parted ways with the family two weeks earlier in Minneapolis.

"Dad got me a job in that garage," Irvin recalled in the 1987 interview. "but I didn't work there four hours." Irvin was washing a car—a big black limousine, as he remembered it—when he overheard men arguing. The owner who hired Irvin had been confronted by his business partner. Whether his hiring caused the argument or it was just one additional point of contention between the two men, Irvin didn't know, but he could tell by the way they gestured that his future was being discussed.

The owner who began the argument strode up to the teenager, pointed back at his partner, and demanded, "Did he hire you?" Irvin answered, "Yes, he did." The owner shot back, "You're fired!"

Suddenly, the last thread connecting Irvin to his family snapped. How would he earn money for a train ticket now?

The owner of the limousine witnessed the scene. Irvin recalled what happened next: "He come up and said, 'Did that guy fire you?' I said, 'Yes, he did.' He said, 'Do you want a job?' I said, 'Sure!'"

Irvin's head must have spun. In a few short hours, he'd lost his family, gained a job, lost a job—then fallen into a second job! One moment he felt distraught; a minute later, he sat in a limousine, befriended by a man of influence!

The teenager's benefactor happened to be a successful Minneapolis business owner. "We drove down to the Wholesale Rug Co.," Irvin remembered. "He put me to work in the shipping room, wheeling carts."

After a week of work, Irvin received a paycheck for $12.50. Without taking time to thank the limousine owner—an omission that bothered him the rest of his life—Irvin made a bee line to the train depot.

"I went down and bought a ticket," he said. "I wanted to get to Chicago awful bad!"

Irvin made it to Chicago only to discover another problem: how could he find his family? He had no map, no address, no instructions. When they left Minneapolis, his family didn't know themselves where they would land. How do you find five people among a city of 2,650,000?

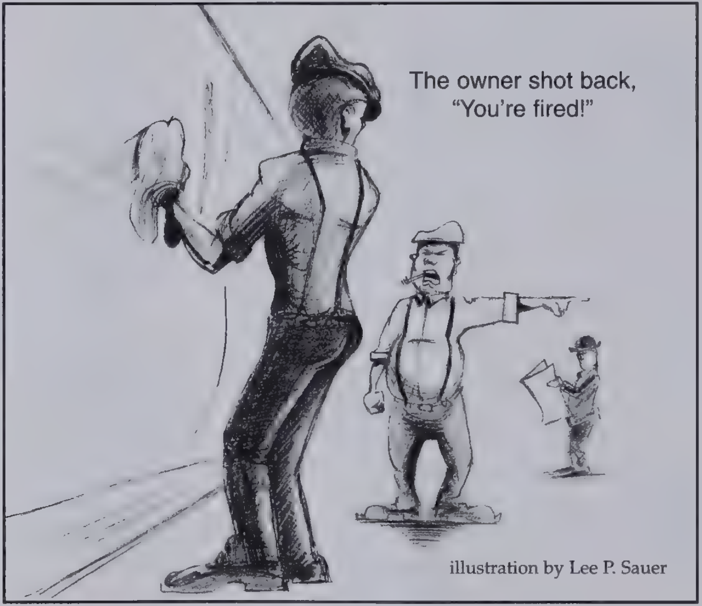


illustration by Lee P. Sauer

Irvin knew this much: an uncle of his lived in Oak Park. It wasn't a lot, but it was all he had to go on. "I asked somebody at the train depot how to get to Oak Park," Irvin remembered. They pointed him to a streetcar.

Irvin got on, determined not to have this thread of hope snapped. "I asked the conductor every stop 'Is this Oak Park?'" Finally, an exasperated conductor said, yes, Oak Park. Time to get off. Irvin chuckled as he told the story. He always suspected the conductor advised him to get off just to be rid of his questions.

Whatever the reason, Irvin left the streetcar at least five miles from Oak Park. Still, the conductor proved right in a way. The premature exit deposited Irvin exactly where he wanted to be. Unaware he stood only a few blocks from his family, Irvin began walking. A short while later, he crossed a street right into Rieke history.

Glenn laughed at the absurdity of the odds—and at the first sight of his brother. "He had an apple in one hand and a blow torch in the other!" said Glenn. "Those were his only two possessions."

Irvin never fully got a grasp of his good fortune. "How did I get started in the right direction?" he asked in the interview. "Darn if I know. Fate must have played a part in that!"

* * *

Although TW gave up his homestead dream, he did not relinquish his independent ways when the family settled in Chicago.

Irvin worked and studied in Chicago

Seventeen years old when he landed in Chicago, Irvin immediately began helping his family financially.

At first he worked as a mechanic for the Yellow Cab Company on Chicago's Rush Street. In the Spring of 1919, Irvin returned to the family's Montana homestead to put in a crop. That summer, dry dust blew so constantly, mothers covered the faces of children with damp cloths so the little ones could breath. Crops once again failed.

In the Fall of 1919, Irvin returned to Chicago and went to work in his father's machine shop. At night, Irvin attended Crane Technical Institute.

TW found a like-minded compatriot within walking distance from the Rieke flat. An old Frenchman named Larowe worked alone out of a small machine shop on Lake Street. The shop held basic tool and die equipment, including a lathe and drill press. Larowe worked at small jobs sent his way by bigger firms. Irvin recalled that the old man made large ladles for a machine that churned milk into butter, as well as parts for a "stretching" machine that was purported to make people taller!

TW began hanging around Larowe's shop. He perhaps used some of the old man's tools, or lent a hand on more difficult jobs. Somehow the younger man endeared himself to the older man. One day Larowe mentioned he was ready to retire. Then he asked: Would TW. be interested in taking over the shop?

Homesteading had not extinguished TW's bright ambition. He still sought to put his family on Easy Street. To back his dream, he still had his almost unending capacity for hard work. The idea of running his own shop must have appealed to him greatly. Unlike farming, he wouldn't have to start from scratch. Hell, he'd been working with metal since his teen years in Fort Wayne! TW eagerly accepted the offer.

He started working alongside Larowe. Finding odd jobs proved to be no problem. TW's boss at Benjamin Electric willingly sent extra jobs to his star craftsman. The volume of work at the little shop increased rapidly. Only months after the family moved back to Chicago—perhaps as few as two or three months—TW left Benjamin Electric and became a full-time, independent businessman.

In the spring of 1920, Larowe retired. From then on, TW rented the shop and worked as its sole proprietor. He named his new enterprise T.W. Rieke Tool & Die Works.

As TW's perfectionist ways became known, the reputation of his business grew. "Dad was an A-number-1 machinist," Glenn explained. "He was a stickler for doing things absolutely right. He always said, 'If you miss by an inch, why, that was a mistake. But if you missed by a thousandth of an inch, that was damn carelessness!'"

Area businesses learned a simple fact: to get a job done right, take it to TW.

* * *

As the little machine shop's reputation rose, so did social temperatures just outside its doors.

In late July of 1919, at the Thirty-First Street Beach, an unfortunate incident served as a match under the incendiary race situation. Both blacks and whites used the beach, which became informally segregated. One day, a black child swam into "white waters." A fight broke out. Some witnesses said a white child threw a rock which hit the boy in the head. However it happened, the youngster drowned.

For five days, furious gangs of both blacks and whites roamed the streets. When rioting reached the Rieke neighborhood, TW and Irvin were at work in the shop. "People (were) marching up and down the sidewalks, waving razor blades and whooping and hollering," said Glenn. The action outside must have been fairly intense for the Rieke men opted to stay in the shop all night until the situation grew calmer. On July 30, Mayor William "Big Bill" Thompson sent militia troops to the south side. When the riots ended, coroners counted 22 blacks and 14 whites among the dead.

Machine inspired tall tale

Irvin always wished he would grow to be six feet tall. in 1919, however, his 18-year-old body seemed to be stuck at about 5-foot-10.

That's when he got interested in the "stretching" machine. "We went by a store front one day and they had a man in this stretcher, stretching him out with a collar around his neck, and straps on his feet," remembered Glenn. "A customer would do that quite a while, then come back in in a couple of days and do it again."

Like modern miracle diets and skin creams, the owner of the machine promised magical results. "This guy would stretch people so they would get taller!" said Glenn with a laugh.

Irvin looked long and hard in the store window. He thought he saw a six-foot reflection of himself, thanks to the machine. But his parents threw cold water on the idea of paying hard-earned money for sparring with nature.

"Irvin wanted this guy to stretch him," Glenn recalled with a chuckle. "But Mother and Dad talked him out of it!"

Committees studied the riots. Finis Farr in his book "Chicago," summed up the official conclusions this way: "Negroes and working class whites lived at best in a state of temporary truce where the exigencies of metropolitan housing crowded them together."

Although only eight years old at the time, Glenn felt the tension. "The neighborhood was very, very poor, about two thirds black and one third white," he said. "These little kids—seven, eight, ten years old—would run in packs. The kids didn't call me names, but they would taunt you and try to pick a fight."

The homestead kid didn't know what to make of his aggressive neighbors. "About the only place you had to play or ride your bicycle was the sidewalk," Glenn said. "A lot of times, they would push me off the sidewalk. Sometimes they'd pelt me with stones."

On several occasions, the harassment went beyond taunting. "I had a little two-wheel bicycle my Dad had bought and they'd steal it," Glenn explained. "Dad would have to go get it. Their parents wouldn't do anything about it. They'd just shrug it off, like it was a normal thing."

In that particular neighborhood, theft wasn't uncommon. Glenn watched gangs of kids steal regularly from street vendors. "They would see an old fellow going down the street with a cart loaded with apples," he said. "One kid would grab an apple off the cart and run. The old man would take after him, then the whole pack would clean his cart out and upset it!"

A store-boughten toy

Chicago supplied Glenn with lots of new experiences. One took place at Christmas.

"The only toys I had my Father had made," he said. "Our second year in Chicago, we were invited to my uncle's house for Christmas dinner. One of their children had been given two toys exactly alike–little wagons. So they gave me one.

"That was my first boughten toy I ever had!"

The tension between groups didn't lend itself to fun and games. Even in a neighborhood full of kids, finding enough to play baseball together proved to be a challenge. "There was a group right around where we lived that we associated with," said Glenn. "We'd play ball in a vacant lot next to us. Sometimes we'd roller skate on the sidewalks, but that's about all."

Isolation within a heavy population is often described as a modern problem, but Glenn said the phenomena grew roots 80 years ago. "You didn't mingle or associate with the other kids like they do here," he said, speaking in Auburn. "That was the way it was there. You didn't even know your next-door neighbor!"

Glenn can recall only one friend from his Chicago days. "There was a little white boy I kind of took to," he said. "I always called him 'Bud.' He was a little bit off in his head. His parents lived in a house down the street a little a ways."

Even this neighborhood relationship would end unhappily. One day, Bud ran into the street and was struck by a car. "The car never stopped!" said Glenn. "Dad run out there and picked Bud up where he was laying in the street unconscious. Dad put the boy in our old car and rushed him down to Garfield Park Hospital."

Despite good intentions, TW would only grow frustrated from helping Bud. "The hospital wouldn't accept the boy unless Dad signed papers saying he would take care of any expenses," Glenn explained. "Dad was so mad! He give them such a tongue lashing, they took the boy in without the papers."

Glenn said his friend recovered, but the accident exacerbated his mental challenges. "Bud was a little off beforehand, but the accident didn't do him any good," he concluded.

* * *

Right after the family's move to Chicago, Glenn began attending classes at the Warren School on Chicago's Warren Avenue.

The experience did not start out well. Because this was Glenn's first organized learning experience, the school placed him in first grade. Glenn found himself a year older and a head taller than his classmates. Because he missed the first few months of the term, Glenn found himself behind the other children in his studies. Almost all of his classmates were black. The homestead kid felt alone and unsure of himself.

Considering his problems and the fact he had only an abbreviated year in which to adjust, the school made a curious decision when Glenn returned for classes in the fall of 1919. "Because I was older and so much bigger than the rest of the kids, they decided I should skip second grade and go straight to third grade," he said.

Hurrying through the curriculum left a permanent mark on Glenn. "In the second grade they taught the ABC's so kids could just string them off A-B-C-D-E-F -G .... ," he explained. "But I didn't go to second grade. When I graduated from high school, I still couldn't say the ABC's in a row, so I learned to avoid having to say them."

Between his miseries in school and the tension in his neighborhood, Glenn did not enjoy life in Chicago. "Oh, I wished I was back on the farm many times!" he said. "I was born on a prairie. You could see mountains from our home. I liked the outdoors. When we lived in Chicago, those were the worst years of my life!"

* * *

What pleasure Glenn gained in the city came in small, unexpected ways. "Next door to us was a pretty fancy apartment house," he said. "This building and our house were only about six feet apart and a window of our second-floor flat faced a window on the Park Arms' second floor."

Through this close contact, Glenn made the acquaintance of an elderly woman living in one of the apartments. "Her name was Mrs. Hart and she hired me to run to the Lake Street drug store," remembered Glenn. "She would always want a bottle of Pepto Bismal. She must have had an awful bad stomach!"

More than humanitarianism motivated Glenn. Mrs. Hart paid a nickel or dime for each errand. Glenn dropped each hard-earned coin through a hole in the top of a can he kept in his closet. Feeling the can fill up held special significance. "I had torn a picture of a bicycle I wanted out of the Sears & Roebuck catalog," he said with a grin. " It cost 29 dollars and some cents. Dad said, 'When you get enough money, you can buy that bicycle.'"

Needless to say, Glenn looked forward to serving as Mrs. Hart's legs. "I

TW firm but fair

In an age when parents faithfully applied the rod to avoid spoiling their children, the Rieke siblings found no reason to fear their father. "My Dad never spanked us," said Glenn matter-of-factly.

He underlined the point with a story. "We always knocked our baseballs toward a building on the other side of the vacant lot near our home. One day I hit a ball through a neighbor's window.

"I talked to the lady and told her I would get my Dad to fix it. I told Dad and he bought a piece of glass, glazed the glass into the window frame, and fixed the window for the lady."

Asked how he could so casually tell his father about the mishap, Glenn explains: "I wasn't scared to tell Dad about the window. He always taught us, if we done something that needed to be reported, why, we should come to him and tell him."

In the coming years, Glenn would have several more occasions to test his father's commitment to hands-off discipline.

had an arrangement with her: when she wanted me, she'd put a magazine up in her window," he said and chuckled. "When I come home from school, the first thing I 'd do was to look and see if there was a magazine up there!"

The boy's relationship with the woman paid an unexpected bonus. "I found out she was an aunt to Jack Dempsey!" Glenn said. At the time, Dempsey held the title of World Heavyweight Boxing Champion. He won the title in 1919 and wouldn't relinquish it until 1926. Even in an age of heroes, to catch a glimpse of Jack Dempsey ranked high on a young boy's wish list. "On a couple of occasions, Jack Dempsey came over to Mrs. Hart's apartment," said Glenn. "I saw him but didn't get to talk to him."

Glenn meets Jack Dempsey

As a child, Glenn ran errands for his neighbor lady. Those small acts of kindness introduced him to a sports legend when he became a man.

"Years later, I was in New York City on business," he explained. "I was walking down Broadway and passed Jack Dempsey's restaurant. When I looked in the window, there was Jack Dempsey settin' in the front window to greet customers!"

Glenn decided to stop in for lunch. After he finished his meal, he approached the boxing champion.

"Jack, I'd like to make your acquaintance," Glenn recalled saying. The two men shook hands and Glenn continued, " I know somebody of your family." He then relayed how years earlier he had run errands for Mrs. Hart, who lived on Washington Boulevard in Chicago.

"Oh," Dempsey replied, "That's my aunt!" He relayed to Glenn the expected news that the old woman had passed on years before.

The two men talked a while longer, then Glenn left. The short encounter left an impression, however. "It was pretty exciting!" said Glenn.

* * *

With fights in the streets and boxers for heroes, Chicago gained a tough reputation. It was well deserved. While petty crime was taking place in the open daylight, organized crime operated in the shadows.

On January 16, 1921, the Eighteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution went into effect. Commonly known as Prohibition, the law made it illegal to make, sell or transport intoxicating drinks anywhere in the United States.

In Chicago, the law heralded the beginning of a lucrative underground booze business for criminals. On May 11, 1920, the era's first high profile murder of a Chicago "businessman" took place. The funeral procession for Big Jim Colosimo rivaled that which the city conducted for Abraham Lincoln 55 years earlier. In listing the judges, city officials and politicians who took part, Finis Farr wrote, "It was the first but by no means the last great open ceremony in Chicago symbolizing and demonstrating that crime and politics were two aspects of the same thing."

It's interesting to note that the mob boss who replaced Big Jim soon needed someone to do his dirty work. To fill the bill, he imported from Brooklyn a 23-year-old called Scarface Al Capone.

Glenn could laugh later, but he admits to being scared in his brush with the Chicago criminal element.

"The Chicago newspapers were running stories that an automobile salesman had been murdered," he recalled. "Somebody had asked this fellow to demonstrate an automobile and the salesman never come back. The authorities were looking for his body."

The victim lived within two blocks of the Rieke's rented home. "I saw a big crowd around the house one day, so I walked down to see what it was all about," said Glenn.

It was an age when a young boy could wiggle up to the front of a crowd hovering over a crime scene. The sight Glenn encountered would remain with him a lifetime. "They were digging the dirt floor out of the garage," said Glenn. "The first thing I saw was a pair of shoes sticking out of the ground. They had started to uncover his body!"

Glenn laughed at the quick end to the tale. "That's all I saw," he said. "I went home!

* * *

The reputation of TW's shop led to an event in late 1920 that is now legend in the internationally-known Rieke Corporation.

"One day a man come in the shop and wanted some thread gauges made," said Glenn, retelling the familiar story. "While Dad was making the thread gauges, he and this fellow began to talk. Dad found out the man was a government inspector."

Out of simple curiosity, TW asked, "What are these gauges for?" The inspector explained that they would be used to check threads on oil barrels. At the time, neither flanges—the threaded holes on the barrels—nor the plugs which screwed into the flanges were standardized.

"To make drum closures, they cut a hole in the barrel and put a flange in it. Then they would acetylene weld around the flange," said Glenn. "But by the time the weld went around the flange, one side was cold and the ring warped out of shape. The threaded plugs used to fill the hole wouldn't fit!"

Murder memories resurfaced

Glenn never forget the discovery of a murdered car salesman's body in a neighborhood garage. "I carried that picture of the shoes in my mind!" he said.

Years later, the memory surfaced abruptly. "I saw a Tribune article that listed all the dramatic murders that had occurred in Chicago," said Glenn. "One of the pictures showed two shoes sticking out of the ground!"

Glenn shook his head at the memories the photo recalled. "I knew exactly where it was and when that picture was taken!"

To make a warped ring fit, workers would retap each flange by hand. Since each flange was basically custom made, plugs off one barrel rarely fit the flange on another. As a final insult in the flawed system, retapping caused shavings to fall into the barrel and ultimately mix with clean oil. "Nobody was happy," said Glenn. "It was a slow and very expensive process to put flanges in. One worker could get from five to seven flanges done an hour."

The government inspector showed how anxious he was to have an accurate set gauges by repeatedly visiting TW's shop to check on the gauges. On one such visit, he made a remark to this effect: "If somebody could figure out a method of putting a ring into a steel drum without welding it out of shape, he'd have the world by the tail!"

That was all TW needed to hear. "He came back nights and worked on drawings," remembered Glenn. At first TW simply tried to improve the old welding method, but he couldn't overcome warping metal. Then he remembered a project he undertook at Benjamin Electric. To prevent a square nut from slipping, he had created a die which formed a pocket out of flat metal. When the metal pocket was crimped around the square nut, the nut no longer turned. TW decided to apply this radically new approach to the barrel flange dilemma.

"He found he was able to put a flange in the barrel hole using a punch press instead of a welding torch," said Glenn. "The flange had little knobs on it and the punch press pulled the barrel metal around it. Those little knobs prevented the flange from rotating. Not only that, but when you screwed the plug in, it sealed right on the barrel metal itself!"

TW's new concept solved all the former problems. With a series of four punch-press operations, one man could put a hole in a drum, lay a ring on it, and cinch it in. Since no welding was necessary, the ring stayed perfectly round and retapping would no longer be required. With TW's process, one man now could install 60 closures an hour!

TW's inventive process takes a few short words to recap. In real time, the concept took him nearly a year of trial and error to perfect. But he stayed at the task as doggedly as he dug the doomed prairie dam. Belief in his idea drove him and he steadfastly stayed at its development until he created a revolutionary new product.

The next step, however, would prove even tougher: selling the idea to customers.

From his talks with the government inspector, TW knew that Wilson & Bennett Manufacturing Company in Clearing, Illinois, mass produced barrels. In the 1987 interview, Irvin described his initial sales call: "When we made that first flange, Dad told me to take it to this company to see if they would order some. So I stick it in my pocket, get on the street car and go out there. Now remember, this is the first time I've been in an office in my life. I must have looked like a hayseed! A girl sittin at the desk said, 'What can I do for you?' I pulled the flange out of my pocket and handed it to her. She said, 'What is it?' I said, 'It's a bung hole.' She looked at me as if to say, 'you smart aleck!'

"She picked up the telephone and called someone. He come out with two employees, one was their chief purchasing agent." The purchasing agent well understood the frustrations of the traditional ring and plug system. He could envision what a successful new approach would mean to the industry. Turning TW's invention over in his hand, he suddenly asked, "Can you make me 10,000 of these?" Taken aback, Irvin answered, "I think we can."

That night Irvin returned to the family flat with the first real order for Rieke closures. Glenn said the success prompted a happy celebration.

The joy soon turned to concern. Now that they had the first big order, TW had some logistical challenges to overcome. Where would he get raw material? How could he get equipment that was capable of mass production? And finally, what if this invention fulfilled its promise and turned into something big; how could TW protect his

A slip in time

One memory Glenn carried from his Chicago days spoke of the variety of eras he lived in.

"When we first moved to Chicago, there were a lot of horses," he said. "I remember setting upstairs one day. Outside it was raining pitchforks. I was looking out and here come a fire engine pulled by a four-horse team down Indiana Avenue. It was one of those old wagons that had a steam boiler."

The sight became more memorable for what happened next. "When they come around the corner, the lead horses slipped, fell, and drug the other horses down," Glenn said. "It was a mess of harnesses, all tangled up. It was quite a show!"

idea?

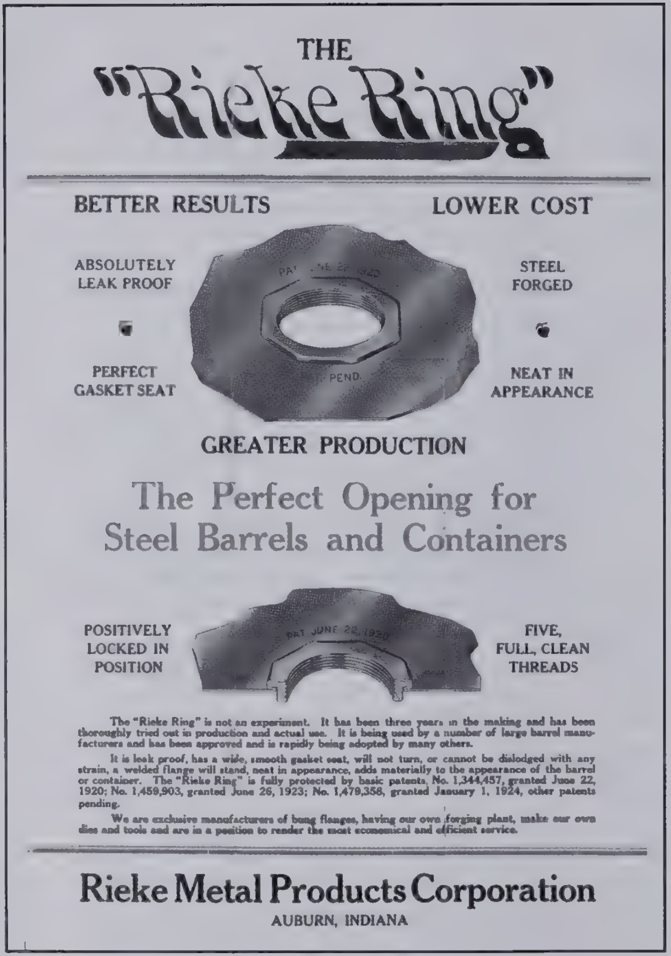
To address this last question, on October 4, 1921, TW wrote a letter to his friend, Fred Erickson, whom he entrusted as a witness. The letter read:

To whom it may concern, I, Theodore W. Rieke, 2806 Washington Blvd., conceived the idea of a new steel drum flange and a new method of applying. My idea is to do away with welding and also using the barrel body itself as a gasket seat by forming the barrel in such a way around the ring to hold it in place and relying on the odd shape of the ring to prevent it from turning in it's seat.

TW included drawings of his concept and noted that he made the first sample on October 3, 1921. The letter ended, *Signed this day, Theodore W. Rieke.*

The simple letter served as poor man's patent protection. On a wider scale, it served notice that a new company had been born.

* * *



PAT JUNE 22 1920
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THE

"Rieke Ring"

BETTER RESULTS

LOWER COST

ABSOLUTELY LEAK PROOF

STEEL FORGED

PERFECT GASKET SEAT

NEAT IN APPEARANCE

GREATER PRODUCTION

The Perfect Opening for Steel Barrels and Containers

POSITIVELY LOCKED IN POSITION

FIVE, FULL, CLEAN THREADS

The "Rieke Ring" is not an experiment. It has been three years in the making and has been thoroughly tried out in production and actual use. It is being used by a number of large barrel manufacturers and has been approved and is rapidly being adopted by many others.

It is leak proof, has a wide, smooth gasket seat, will not turn, or cannot be dislodged with any strain, a welded flange will stand, neat in appearance, adds materially to the appearance of the barrel or container. The "Rieke Ring" is fully protected by basic patents, No. 1,344,457, granted June 22, 1920; No. 1,459,903, granted June 26, 1923; No. 1,479,358, granted January 1, 1924, other patents pending.

We are exclusive manufacturers of bung flanges, having our own forging plant, make our own dies and tools and are in a position to render the most economical and efficient service.

Rieke Metal Products Corporation
AUBURN, INDIANA

This early RMPC ad explained TW's invention.

Early problems hobbled production of TW's new flange. The design needed adjustment to prevent the ring from spinning in its barrel-head seat. The Larowe shop's second-hand equipment presented quality liabilities. The little Lake Street shop simply wasn't equal to the demands of producing the product. Finally, no matter how fed up with the problems caused by the old welding system, drum manufacturers proved reluctant to embrace the new technology.

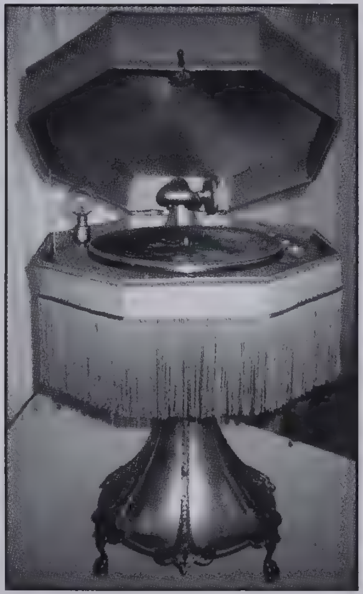
One by one, TW fought off the onslaught of troubles. He added more teeth to the flange ring, giving it a better bite into the drum lid metal. He couldn't add new shop equipment—there simply was not enough money—but he could use creativity to make improvements. TW scoured Chicago junk yards and snapped up the refuse of other companies. These machines he refurbished and retooled until they fit his needs.

"They made the original flanges out of old pipe," said Glenn in explaining the manufacturing process his father fashioned. "Dad or Irvin would cut the pipe into rings on his lathe. Then they'd put them on a revolving

Victrola sings of TW inventiveness

The Rieke family still owns a combination record player/lamp that demonstrates TW's unique talent for invention.

While he worked on developing his barrel flange, TW continued to take on small tool and die jobs. The Burns-Pollock company of Indiana Harbour, Indiana presented him with a challenge. The company wished to build a combination phonograph player and lamp. It asked TW to make dies for forming metal components in a punch press. TW completed the job and received one of the finished contraptions in thanks.



"This was the first and only musical instrument in our home for many years," said Glenn. "The base formed a bell, and there was a phonograph player inside. The lamp had French lace all the way around, one of those old style lamps. The lamp swung back so you could put records on." The furniture piece followed the Rieke family to all their subsequent homes. Eventually TW replaced it with an At-Water-Kent radio.

Demoted to a relic, the phonograph/lamp continued to hold a place of honor in the Riekes' esteem. For years it stood in the Rieke Corporation's board room.

Years after Glenn assumed the company's presidency, an Auburn doctor chanced to enter the company's boardroom. Dr. Everett Rogers took special notice of the antique phonograph/lamp.

"Where did you get that lamp?" Rogers asked. Glenn told the physician his father made metal parts for the instrument. The doctor replied, "I used to work in that plant in Chicago while I was going to Northwestern University!"

table Dad had rigged up to a furnace he built. The rings would come out white-hot. Then they put the rings through this little 35-ton press and pressed them down to the shape they wanted. They made 3/4-inch plugs from 3/4-inch pipe, and 2-inch rings from 2-inch pipe."

TW turned an old drill press into a hand tapping machine. He made his own thread dies for cutting threads into the rings, and he made his own heat-treated taps. In effect, he created a custom-equipped shop specifically outfitted to produce his invention.

Even with the equipment in place, money for supplies remained scarce, so TW applied his resourcefulness to obtaining raw materials.

When newspapers announced that barracks at the Great Lakes Naval Station 40 miles north of Chicago would be torn down, TW contacted the contractor hired for demolition. He came away from the meeting with a simple deal: if he disassembled the barracks' bunk beds, he got to keep the 3/4-inch pipe out of which they were made. "So he took the whole family out—sister and Mother and Irvin and I and Mahlon—and we dismantled those beds," Glenn recalled. "We worked for the better part of two weeks using pipe wrenches. We took those beds apart, then brought the pipe back."

TW applied the same recycling spirit to gaining more manufacturing floor space. He found what he called an "abandoned" house at 2701-3 Fulton Street. Soon, a 35-ton Farragut punch press thumped away inside. When an unsettling bounce in the wooden floor hinted at disaster, TW and Irvin installed additional braces in the home's basement.

Despite their effort, in just a matter of months, the old house teetered on the verge of imploding. Another move was inevitable.

This time, TW found space to rent in a commercial building. "Towards town, at 2444 E. Washington Street, was the old street car barns," said Glenn. "It was a real big building covering one whole city block." The part of the building where street cars entered looked like a flat barn, but at the corner of Washington Boulevard the building sprouted a second story. TW rented one small room on the second floor.

With a more substantial building beneath him, TW added equipment. He picked up a used drill press and a six-spindle tapping machine, a punch press and a lathe. He designed a new furnace in which to heat the rings cut from pipe.

The increase in manufacturing capabilities seems to have coincided with an upturn in orders. Despite other companies' resistance to the new closure system, Wilson & Bennett's confidence—and orders—grew. Later developments strained the relationship, but in the early 1920's, the big drum manufacturer supported the struggling Rieke venture. "To the day he died, Steve Bennett gave himself credit for starting the Rieke Corporation!" said Glenn.

The entire Rieke work force of the time consisted of TW, Irvin and Mary, with Mary's brother Henry Rathert helping on Saturdays. Although there was no clear division of labor, TW concerned himself more with solving problems and improving the manufacturing process while Irvin managed the production of flanges.

With a quantum leap of changes accompanying the move to the street car barn, TW's place of business evolved from a tool-and-die shop into a factory. To signify this, and also to reflect Irvin's considerable share in the workload, TW changed the name of the company to the more impressive sounding T.W. Rieke & Son Tool & Die Works.

* * *

As if wholesale changes in the business weren't enough, about this time the Rieke family made personal adjustments.

Just two months before TW wrote the patent letter for his new invention—on August 12, 1921 to be exact—Theodore William Rieke, Jr. was born. The family called him Junior.

Already crowded in their small flat, the Riekes required more space. "We moved out to 1225 Austin Boulevard in Austin, into a second story flat," said Glenn. "It was a fairly new house. An Italian family moved downstairs The upstairs just reeked with garlic from all their Italian cooking. I've never liked garlic smell since!"

The change in address for the family meant a change in schools for Glenn. The community of Austin sat alongside Oak Park, one of Chicago's older western suburbs.

"The school I attended only had temporary, one-room schoolhouses on a big, vacant lot," remembered Glenn. "There were 12 little schoolhouses, each connected to a central building. They kept the coal bin and furnace in the central building and the caretaker lived there. From the central building, they piped hot water to heat registers in the little schoolhouses."

Glenn was still saving money to buy the Sears bicycle. "I talked the old janitor that took care of the place into giving me a job," he said. "He paid me 10 cents a room for cleaning the little schoolhouses, plus I would get a free glass of milk each day for lunch."

The job required several hours of sustained effort every night. "I swept them and cleaned the rooms," remembered Glenn. "Then I'd walk home, a little over a mile and a quarter, whether it was fall, winter or spring!"

Glenn soon discovered the janitor wasn't making good use of his newly-found free time. "I was doing most of his work while he was sitting back in that warm, little room of his, imbibing on a bottle," recalled Glenn. "He would get so drunk, you couldn't talk to him!"

The adult's poor conduct left the 11-year-old boy in an awkward position. "The janitor apparently spent all his money for liquor," said Glenn. "He paid me the first month, but the second month, he didn't. He kept putting me off, putting me off. It got into January, February, and boy, it was cold and miserable!"

Then, one day, Glenn went to school and learned the janitor had skipped out on his job. "He owed me three month's work!" said Glenn. "I never got my money, so I cleaned those darned rooms all winter long for nothing!"

* * *

Despite a few outward signs of success, TW realized he needed more capital to get his business off and running. If only he had money to buy raw materials at discounted prices, if only he could buy proper equipment to make the jobs go faster, why, profits would soar!

Armed with confidence, TW began to look for outside money sources. Through a relative, Ed Richter, TW made the acquaintance of a Chicago real estate developer and apartment building owner by the name of Arthur Lorenz. Lorenz would introduce the little company—not very happily—to the big time.

On November 8, 1922, in the company's small office at 163 East Washington Street, TW helped draft an agreement in which he would sell his little company to an Illinois business entity by the name of Rieke Metal Products Corporation. Five stockholders would assume a percentage of ownership at $100 per share. TW retained control with 197 shares. Most if not all of his stake in the company came through assets the company currently-held. To assign a money value to TW's invention, the new corporation included on a list of assets a "secret process." That enigmatic item accounted for $6,000 of the company's $10,000 total worth.

Lorenz gained a significant voice in the company by agreeing to invest $10,000 over a prescribed length of time. The investment authorized him to exercise just above half of TW's voting power with 100 shares.

Three other stockholders—Walter Courtney, a superintendent of the Dr. Scholl's foot products company; Dr. Ralph R. Neiman, a public accountant; and Richter—would each take possession of one token share each.

On November 10, the State of Illinois made the incorporation official.

On November 13, the new board of directors met for the first time in the company offices. After electing officers—Edmund J. Rieke (TW's older brother) as president, TW as vice president and secretary, and Lorenz as treasurer—T.W. Rieke Tool & Die Works officially turned into Rieke Metal Products Corporation.

Ed's presence and high office might seem puzzling, but not if you knew TW. "Dad was a shop man," explained Glenn. "He couldn't care less about titles." In fact, TW would never hold the title of president in the company he started. Surviving notes from the 1922 incorporation reveal a complicated blur of shares and credits, positions and personnel. Because of this, it isn't hard to imagine a novice businessman wanting his experienced older brother around.

Bringing Ed into the mix, however, diluted TW's voting power. By January of 1923, Ed held 87.75 shares with TW close behind at 86.75 shares. The brothers could still combine their voting power to control the company, but if a split in their relationship developed, they would be at the mercy of Lorenz's 100 shares.

Despite the danger, Ed became deeply involved in his brother's dream.. Even though he continued to work full time as a salesman for the Griley Uncle Paper & Pulp Company in Fort Wayne, Ed worked part-time as an RMPC salesman to help the company gain new orders—a need sorely felt.

The Riekes began 1923 with high hopes. TW had an idea in which they fervently believed. They had a "new" shop that featured "new" equipment. Plus, they had in place an organizational structure which could help the business ride out rough times, yet allow it to soar to new heights of growth. Who could help but be optimistic?

Then, suddenly, storm clouds gathered.

In a February 14, 1923, meeting of the board of directors, Dr. Neiman presented unsettling money figures. The numbers showed it cost RMPC five cents to produce a barrel flange. That news came as a shock, for the board knew TW sold his star product to customers for that same price. It didn't take an accountant like Neiman to explain why the company couldn't get its head above water. The board charged TW and Irvin with exploring every possible method of reducing production costs.

At a special meeting called on April 20, the board learned the company was failing to bring in enough to pay its workers (TW, Mary, Irvin, and Ed). New orders were not coming in as expected. Unsold flanges piled up.

Signs of dissension sprouted. Someone proposed securing a loan, but the board could not agree on a plan. The meeting ended with the problems left to simmer for another month.

One thing was certain: the company would not die for lack of effort. "Dad wouldn't come home for a couple of days at a time," Glenn said. "He would just stay at the shop. Mother would take his food to him."

Still, on May 19, the pot boiled over. Lorenz—the company's single largest stock holder, the man who just six months earlier had promised substantial financial support—resigned as treasurer of the company. TW took his place.

No notes on the feelings of the two men survive, but there's room to read between the lines. Lorenz, the successful and wealthy businessman became upset when the coffers ran dry so quickly. TW, on the other hand, barely seemed bothered. Merle Bisel, who interviewed TW to write a history of the company, wrote: "*(Being treasurer of the company) was a (position) for which he was qualified by experience as he had been his own treasurer all of his life where there has never been any money in the till.*"

The little company had reached the first real crisis in its short history. Something dramatic had to happen.

A NEW BEGINNING

Chapter Seven

TW's older brother, Ed Rieke, owned a cabin on Clear Lake, a big, beautiful natural body of water tucked into the extreme northeast corner of Indiana. On weekends, Ed left his Fort Wayne home and drove north on state roads 327 and 1 for 55 miles. At about the halfway point of the trek, Ed passed through cozy Auburn, Indiana.

The town, simply put, was car crazy. By the time Ed began visiting regularly, Auburn could claim to be the birthplace of at least 11 different auto brands. But, like almost all small, independent automobile manufacturers, Auburn's car makers had sputtered and died. Only the queen of its car factories, Auburn Automobile Company, remained.

By 1923, even Her Highness teetered on the brink of disaster. A group of Windy City financiers known as "The Chicago Gang" bought the company from Auburn's carriage-making Eckhart family in 1919. The decision seemed prudent: a wise investment in an emerging industry. Then post war economics and competition with big automakers sucked virtually all small car makers into a downward spiral. As Ed made his pleasure trips north, Auburn Automobile Company bled red ink three years in a row.

City fathers read the writing on the wall. Through the Auburn Commercial Club, they began to actively recruit companies which would diversify the community's automobile-dominated economy.

Even as a casual visitor, Ed would have been aware of Auburn's red carpet for new businesses. Fort Wayne newspapers regularly carried Auburn news and the town's own Evening Star proudly reported the Commercial Club's recruiting efforts. Ed would have known, for instance, that the club helped new businesses obtain production space, either through leasing existing buildings or constructing new structures.

With the young Rieke Metal Products Corporation dancing like a barefoot boy on its ever-hotter financial situation, Ed recognized an opportunity to help both his brother's company and the auto town. In June of 1923, Ed contacted commercial club president Fred Neblong. Would the club be interested in helping RMPC relocate to Auburn? As an indication of the club's interest or the company's deteriorating foundation in Chicago—probably both—events began to happen fast.

When the Rieke board met in Chicago on July 12, 1923, it discussed logistics of moving the company. Not everyone was happy with the proposition. Six days later, when the board met again, the company's primary Windy City financial backer, Arthur Lorenze, made it known he wished to sell his interest in RMPC.

Although the gap between Lorenze and the Rieke brothers had been growing almost from the beginning of their alliance eight months earlier, the former's wish to get out must have been unsettling to TW and Ed. Philosophically, there was no question that the two sides did not belong together. But financially, the two sides fit perfectly—in other words, Lorenze had money, the Riekes did not!

Now, instead of Lorenze

E.L. CORD'S AUBURN TENURE

Although the end of Auburn Automobile Company seemed imminent in 1923, the business would flare to life once more in what is now the town's main historical claim to fame.

One year after RMPC's move, in the summer of 1924, 29-year-old super Chicago car salesman Errett Loban Cord made a unique deal with the company's stuffy owners: if he could pull the nose-diving company up to profitability, he would own it.

Cord's marketing genius in two short years produced results far beyond his own cocky plans. With Cord as owner, the company took off on a rocket ride of success. As other companies crashed and burned in the Great Depression, Cord sold top-end Duesenbergs to movie stars and profited from the average man's desire to look like a member of the upper crust. In 1930, the company completed construction of its signature administration building (today it serves as home of the Auburn Cord Duesenberg Museum). In 1931, AAC recorded its all-time record in profits.

During this unprecedented success, Cord turned his attention to other business ventures, particularly the emerging field of aviation. For a short time he succeeded as spectacularly with airplanes as he had with cars.

Cord's power, however, crashed as quickly as it climbed. Without its leader's undiverted attention, AAC lost its ability to forecast American taste. While the country turned its back on extravagance and outward signs of wealth, the company kept churning out cars with haughty attitude. As a result, profits dove into deficits. Cord personally lost Auburn folks' confidence and affection when the brand new Securities Exchange Commission charged that he had manipulated company stock for his own profit.

In 1937, Auburn Automobile Company closed its doors for good.

money pouring into the Rieke company, the financial flow had to be reversed. This presented a fundamental problem. The company couldn't raise enough cash to pay its employees. How, then, could it buy out its primary stockholder?

On July 19, Ed and TW called on Lorenze. The stockholder set the price for his ownership at $7,500. Looking at the figure over a distance of more than 75 years, it is impossible to tell if the figure was fair or not. Lorenze had promised to invest $10,000 or more in the company. This money, however, was to be doled out in installments. Surviving notes do not reveal how much of his commitment Lorenze had paid by this date. Lorenze's selling price must not have been too objectionable to the Riekes, for no mention of haggling survived.

There was, though, discussion on how to raise the necessary funds. On July 20, the board met at TW's 1225 Austin Boulevard home. The gathering probably didn't last long. Options were limited. The board directed Ed to ask Lorenze whether he would agree to a schedule of payments.

The pressure rose. By August 3, news both good and bad arrived. On that day, the three remaining board members—TW and Ed Rieke, plus Ed Richter—met again in the Rieke home. First, TW's brother reported that Lorenze would not agree to any payment plan which the company could afford. On this matter, the board adopted a stalling defense: keep negotiating, they told Ed.

Commercial club built city's foundation

Incorporated Dec. 5, 1895, the Auburn Improvement Association declared it intended *to use its influence and expend its assets to encourage manufacturing and other industrial companies and enterprises to locate in the town of Auburn, Indiana ....*

When founded in 1903, the Auburn Commercial Club assumed the improvement association's mandate. In 1919, the group constructed at the corner of East Eighth and South Cedar Streets a building to serve as its headquarters. Then, in 1929, the commercial club changed its name to the Chamber of Commerce of Auburn.

According to local historian John Martin Smith, in looking over its long history, the chamber counts luring Rieke Metal Products Corporation to the city as one of its top three accomplishments.

"The foresight of the Auburn Chamber of Commerce and its predecessors has proven to be invaluable to healthy growth of the city and county," Smith wrote.

Then Ed offered good news, great news, astounding news! The Auburn Commercial Club had verbally agreed to construct for RMPC a building. The board jumped at the chance to move its base of operation. Get an agreement with the commercial club in writing, they charged Ed, and ask if the building can be completed by October 1.

Even as excitement over a possible move grew, bad news kept arriving. By its August 17th meeting, the board heard its former member and financial advisor, Dr. Ralph R. Neiman, had filed a bankruptcy suit against RMPC in a United States District Court. Although already financially strapped, the board chose to hire a lawyer to fight the claim.

In a view that seems incredibly audacious—or perhaps desperate—the board at the same meeting charged its newly hired lawyer with a second task: notifying the state that it had a new Indiana address!

That same incredulity accompanies consideration of the Auburn Commercial Club's leap of faith. RMPC's Chicago operation stood on its last leg. Former friends were attacking it from all sides. The company had no money, no credit. All it had, really, was a good idea and a capacity for hard work. How could the commercial club take such a risk?

Simple. On the word of one man.

In July, the club sent Burr Oswald Fink to Chicago to meet TW and evaluate RMPC. Burr—better known by his initials BO—knew a thing or two about building a business. After bouncing around jobs with other companies, he took over the struggling Auburn Foundry in December of 1912. Through sheer force of will, he built the company into a solid success.

BO experienced adversity first hand. As recently as 1921, he had suffered from a nervous stomach brought on by business concerns. His doctor delivered an ultimatum: take a year off or you just might die..

At the time of their meeting, BO was about to turn 39 years old, TW Rieke was 44. Employees of the men would later say that even after BO and TW joined the white-shirt crowd of full-time administrators, they both eagerly rolled up their sleeves and went to work on the factory floor. Born in the same generation, tested under fire, more comfortable turning wrenches than pushing papers, BO and TW saw in the other a reflection of themselves.

"They were both hard workers," Irvin noted in the 1987 interview. "Burr Fink was a man very much like Dad," added Glenn. "I guess that's the reason the two of them hit it off so well."

On returning to Auburn after his Chicago visit, BO provided the commercial club with his assessment of TW Rieke and RMPC: "The guy doesn't have much in the way of machinery—he got it all out of a junk yard. But he's got an idea, he's tenacious, and I think he will make a success of it. I'm willing to bank him. I recommend that the club build a building for him."

Mary staged work

According to Rieke family legend, TW used his wife as a prop when the Auburn Commercial Club came calling.

BO Fink arranged to meet TW at the RMPC production plant, then located on the second floor of the old Chicago streetcar barn at 2444 East Washington Street. To make sure the plant looked busy, TW placed Mary with her back to the visitor.

Although Mary regularly worked in the plant, her participation in this particular instance was a piece of TW fiction. "I don't know if she was actually making any flanges or not," Glenn said with a laugh. "But she made a good show for BO!"

BO Fink

After BO's recommendation, the club never wavered . On September 1, 1923, an agreement became official: the club would purchase for $300 lots 113 and 114 in Flukes Third Addition on Auburn's west side. The club contracted J.P. Long to build a quonset-style building to fit the Riekes' needs. In exchange, the club expected a $1,000 down payment from the company and the balance of $4,000 to be paid back within three years.

Merle Bisel captured some of the excitement of the time as he wrote: *"When any individual of the (Rieke) household was awake and speaking, the subject matter pertained to what was happening to them. It was moving too fast, it was getting out of hand, how could they bring it into* *control, how could they meet today's obligations tomorrow? The avalanche had started and they would just have to ride it out and make the right decisions."*

The State of Indiana granted RMPC the right to operate in Auburn on October 19, 1923. Almost in step with the formal go-ahead, the Riekes received word that their new building was ready. The move was on!

TW rented a train boxcar. Into it went the shop equipment and his family's worldly possessions. After all had been packed, there was still room to spare.

Just as the euphoria hit its peak, Glenn's new Sears bike arrived packed in a crate (when the boy's tin-can bank contained just a couple of dollars short of the goal, TW had thrown in the balance). Time was short. Instead of unpacking the bicycle in Chicago, the crate went intact into the boxcar.

Although nervous, the overwhelming emotion felt by the family was happy excitement. A quarter century earlier, similar feelings had accompanied TW and Mary to Chicago. Time had changed their feelings, though. After the heartbreak of the homestead, the raw-edged relationship with their city neighbors, and the tense, hard scrabble survival of TW's business, the Riekes bid easy adieu to the Windy City.

TW, Mary, Irvin, Ruth, Glenn, Mahlon and Junior piled into the family car, then headed east on the old Lincoln Highway. As joyful as they were, the Rieke family probably could have floated to Auburn. Glenn especially looked forward to his new home. "I detested Chicago!" he said. "The school itself was all right, but the people I couldn't take very well. I had been a farm boy and backward as all get out. The city boys recognized that, so I didn't enjoy playing with them."

The Auburn Commercial Club constructed this building on Hazel Street specifically for RMPC. The above photo was taken about the time the company moved into its new home. The building is now part of the Ball Brass and Aluminum Foundry complex.

Auburn quickly fulfilled its promise of a new start. On arrival, the family drove through tree-lined streets and quiet neighborhoods. The old Cadillac pulled up to a small house at 113 East First Street. TW had rented the home until the family could relocate permanently.

Despite new surroundings, Glenn's mind stayed finely focused. "I was very anxious for that boxcar to be unloaded because it had my bicycle in it!" he said. "But we had to wait a couple of days." The train finally arrived. It backed the boxcar onto a Pennsylvania line side track on the south end of town. Then the car sat unopened several more days. For a 12-year-old boy, the wait proved excruciating.

"*Finally* we unloaded the boxcar and my bike," said

Glenn, chuckling at the memory. "It was yellow with red trim. I sat there on the railroad track, assembled it and rode it home!"

When he finally was able to pedal around town, Glenn found a comfortable contrast from the harsh rural and tense city environments he knew before. "I enjoyed Auburn right from the first day!" he said.

Of course, adjustments by the family needed to be made.

Glenn laughed as he recalled the troubles his father had negotiating the driveway to the First Street home. An attached garage sat below ground level. When attempting to park a car, the driver needed to make judicious use of the brakes.

Foreshadowing trouble, the Rieke's fading luxury car allowed the driver to adjust its ride by pumping air into the shock absorbers. Making use of this fine feature, however, adversely affected stopping power.

"When Dad got home, he always poked the nose of his car over the hill and waited for one of us to come out and open the garage door," said Glenn. "Well one day we saw him coming and opened the door. All of a sudden, the car come down, crashed into the door and swung it up. The garage door lay on top of the car, which had gone clear through and hit the basement wall on the other side of the garage! The garage door looked like it was on hinges up above."

After assessing the situation, TW said, "Glenn, you and Mother hold the door up and I'll back the car out." Glenn recalled what happened next: "I was over along the wall. We only had a foot and a half between the wall and where the car was sittin'. But I got in

Traveling in style–sort of

The Rieke family first arrived in Auburn in a vehicle that fit their station in life: TW had rescued it from the junk pile.

Despite having seen better days, the car emitted an Easy Street aura. "The car was a four-cylinder Cadillac sedan with glass petitions between the driver's seat and back seat that you had to open up to talk to the driver," said Glenn. "It had been a rich man's car in its day, but it was an old car when we bought it."

In the back seat, the car even had little glass vases where fresh flowers could be placed.

Catherine visits first and last time

In the Spring of 1924, Grandma Catherine came to Auburn for a visit.

TW's mother made an impression on young Glenn. "It was the first time I ever got to see her," he remembered. "She was a warm and loving person."

Catherine lived in Fort Wayne at the time. Her name was no longer Rieke. On Jan. 29, 1914, the widow of Henry had married John Mickow. Mickow then died, leaving Catherine a widow once again. Throughout her mortal trials, Catherine clung to her religious roots. Until her death, she remained a faithful member of Emmaus Lutheran Church.

The timing of her Auburn visit proved fortuitous. Catherine fell sick while in the Rieke's First Street home. She would not leave alive. At 7:30 a.m. on March 25, Catherine Schuster Mickow, 74, passed away.

The doctor ruled the cause of death "apoplexy." Today's medical community would probably list the cause as a stroke.

Glenn, for one, saw his grandmother's death during her rare visit as a stroke of fate. "It always seemed to me that she somehow knew she did not have long for this world and wanted to be with us," he said.

there, Mother was on the other side, and we held up the door while he backed up."

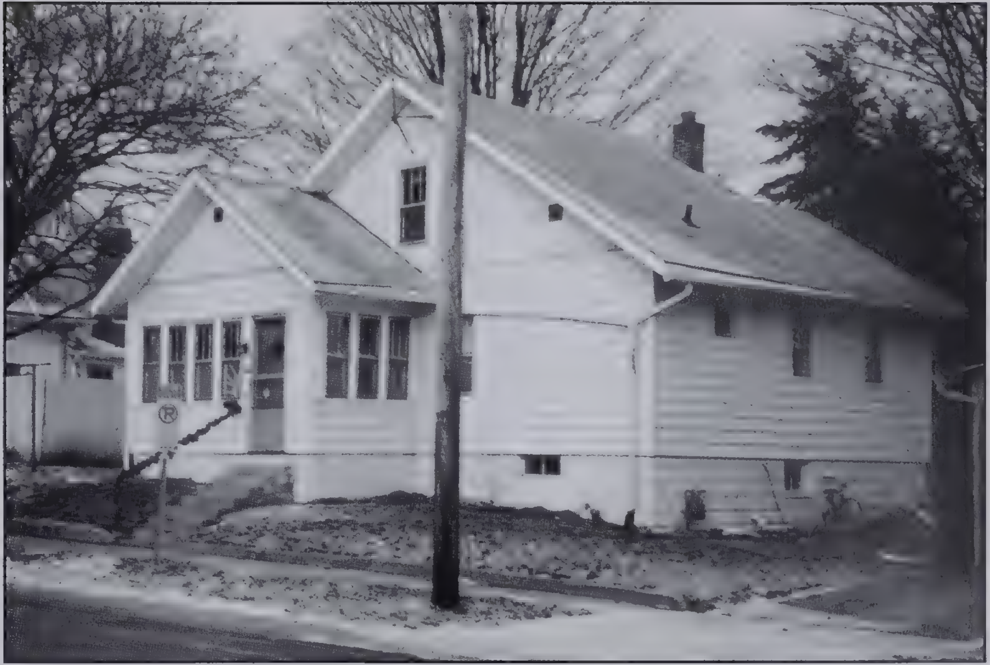
As TW drove the car in reverse, Glenn and Mary lowered the garage door. Instead of ending the incident, their action served as prelude to the real excitement. "Well, Dad got halfway up the ramp and wham! That car came back down and took the door right out of our hands!" Glenn said. "This time, he went clear through the basement to the other wall!" Luckily, no one was hurt.

As summer turned to fall, Glenn had to adjust to a new school. He did so happily. Soon after turning 12 years old, he entered fifth grade at the Harrison School (now McKenney-Harrison). It was an idyllic time in his life. He walked to school while playing kick-the-can. In his free time he roamed town on his new bike. Unlike Chicago, the neighborhood kids became friends rather than antagonists. Glenn put Bob and Hodd Thimler on his list of boyhood companions. Another friend from this time, Fred Quance, would play a significant role in Glenn's life later on.

* * *

If setting up a new factory, moving into a different house and getting used to a new town weren't enough, the Rieke family celebrated a wedding in the fall of 1923. On November 22, Ruth married a Chicago native named Jerry Kelly.

The ceremony was held in a little bungalow at 717 North Main Street (the house has since been torn down and


When they moved to Auburn in 1923, the Riekes rented this home at113 E. First Street. A steep driveway led to a small garage in what is now the basement. The driveway has since been filled in, but an outline of the garage door can still be seen, as indicated by the arrow.

replaced). "All I can remember is that Dad asked Jerry—who played in a band—to sing 'A Bird in a Gilded Cage,'" said Glenn, laughing.

After the wedding, the young couple settled into the Main Street bungalow, then later moved to 323 West Fourth Street.

* * *

As the Riekes' first winter in Auburn arrived, life took on a milder, more comfortable aspect.

Money, however, remained tight. "Our whole family would get together and make our own Christmas tree decorations," said Glenn, remembering frugally sweet holidays. "I don't know how many feet of popcorn we strung to hang on the tree!"

Even in Auburn, even in 1923, the Rieke family did without simple things today's generation take for granted. "I don't think we had electric lights until 1924 or so," said Glenn. "Maybe they were around, but we couldn't afford them."

A lack of electricity produced nostalgia trimmed with danger. "The last time we had candles on our Christmas tree was in the First Street house," said Glenn. "One day one of the candles tipped over. The tree was dry as tinder and it just—poof—went up in flames. Dad run over, grabbed the base of it, drug it out through the front door and threw it on the lawn!"

Warren comes home to rest

A telling incident soon after the Rieke family moved to Auburn indicated they never emotionally unpacked in Chicago, and that they very quickly considered Auburn home.

"One of the first things Dad done was make arrangements for Warren's body to be exhumed out of the homestead grave and brought here," said Glenn. An undertaker in Big Sandy, Montana, took care of arrangements. He removed the wooden coffin TW had made from the hilltop grave, replaced the box with a manufactured model, then by train transported the small boy's body east.

Mary felt better knowing her young son had rejoined the family. After her death, the family assured that she and Warren remained together.

"He's buried with my parents in Woodlawn, the cemetery south of town,"

* * *

Where Chicago had been a stopover in TW's search for Easy Street, in Auburn the family put down roots. The first indication they intended to stay came when TW fulfilled his final homestead promise to Mary. After Warren came to rest in Auburn (see box), the family was once again all together.

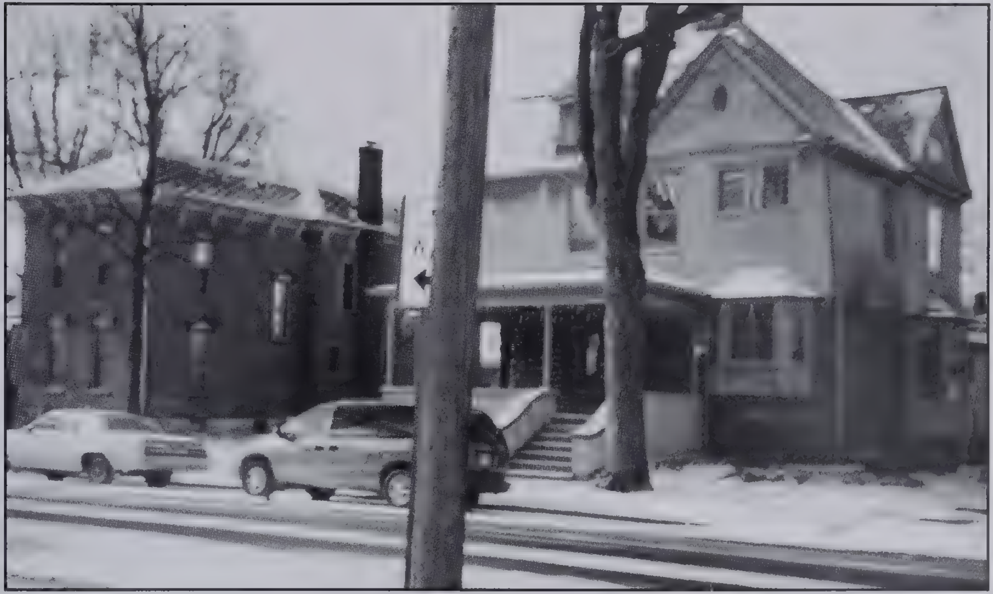
Then in 1925, the family made a major commitment to stay in town by buying a house. "Dad purchased the former home of Morris Eckhart, son of Charles Eckhart, the carriage maker and city father who donated the YMCA and library," said Glenn. "Morris built a home on the corner of Fourth and Van Buren, at 307 North Van Buren Street. Morris was retired in California when Dad bought the house from him."

The heavy stone structure would serve as a solid foundation for the Rieke family. If "it takes a heap o' livin' to make a house a home," as poet Edgar Guest claimed, the Van Buren Street house uniquely qualified. Within its walls, the Rieke family would live through a gamut of triumphs and tragedies.

For Glenn, the positives far outweighed the negatives. Almost immediately after moving into the new house, the young boy began to make friends in the neighborhood. The house directly south of the Riekes' new home served as parsonage for First Methodist Episcopal Church, which then stood a block away on the corner of Van Buren and Seventh Street (Peoples Federal Savings Bank now occupies the site).

Rev. George Hubbart lived in the parsonage at the time. "I got to know him, helped cut his lawn for him, things like that," said Glenn. On hot summer evenings, the 14-year-old boy would sit on the minister's front porch to talk. Before 1925 was out, Glenn's acquaintance with Rev. Hubbart proved to be a boon to the community.

"I was born out in Montana on a prairie. You could see mountains from our home. I liked the outdoors," Glenn explained. "When we got to Auburn, I saw an opportunity to get back in the woods, to get outdoors. So I and six other boys organized the first Boy Scout Troop in Auburn."



The house on the right, 307 North Van Buren Street, would serve as the Rieke family's home, beginning in 1925. TW would die in the home in 1939. The house on the left formerly served as the parsonage for Auburn's First Methodist Episcopal Church.

The Boy Scouts incorporated in the United States on February 8, 1910. Although begun by Englishman Robert Baden-Powell, the boys' movement reflected America's awakening appreciation of the great outdoors. Teddy Roosevelt's rugged embrace of hiking and hunting, followed by Gene Stratton Porter's sentimental fiction set in natural surroundings, helped create and foster the trend. Scouting, with its emphasis on simple, honest values and self reliance, fit the spirit of the times.

After reading about Scouting—still a fairly new organization—in a boys' magazine, Glenn took the initiative to start a local troop. He gathered information and recruited potential members. Interest ran high and momentum for the group began to build. Then Glenn came to a crossroads: for a troop to be organized, he learned from his research, it needed a sponsor.

"I went over and sat on Rev. Hubbart's front porch and told him our plans to get a Scout Troop. He thought it was a capital idea," said Glenn. "I told him we needed a sponsor and that the national organization recommended churches. He looked into it and got the charter and so forth arranged. That was the beginning of Scouting in Auburn!"

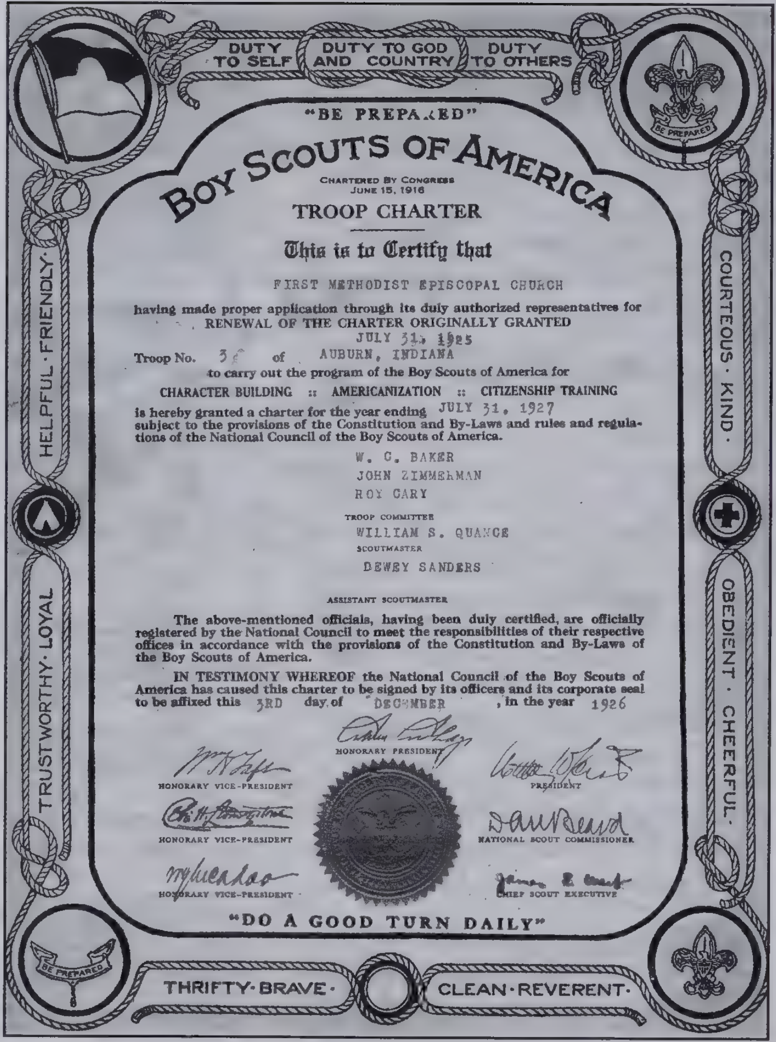
Glenn held up one of the club's first charters. Dated December 3, 1926, it stated that Troop Number 3 of Auburn, Indiana first received its charter on July 31, 1925. The document listed W.C. Baker, John Zimmerman and Roy Cary as members of the troop committee. William S. Quance held the title of Scoutmaster, with Dewey Sanders serving as Assistant Scoutmaster.

"Bill Quance was my friend Fred's older brother," Glenn explained. "At the time, he was a young man who belonged to the Methodist Church. He worked in the Evening Star press department."

Framed by illustrations of rope tied in different knots, the charter displayed Scout credos: "Duty to Self, Duty to God and Country, Duty to Others." Also included were attributes Scouts aspire to: trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, reverent. Finally, the charter presented two Scout mottos: "be prepared," and "do a good turn daily."

"That stuff gets drummed into you and you take it to heart," said Glenn, looking at the document in his hands. Yes, he nodded, he still believed strongly in conducting one's life as a Scout. He certainly acted on his convictions. From the time Glenn started the first troop through his work on this biography, he remained active in the BSA in some capacity.

Scouting teaches the virtues of leadership and Glenn eagerly took the lessons to heart. In addition, Scouting provided opportunities for the young man to practice what the organization preached. Through setting up the program,



DUTY TO SELF · DUTY TO GOD AND COUNTRY · DUTY TO OTHERS

"BE PREPARED"

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

CHARTERED BY CONGRESS
JUNE 15, 1916

TROOP CHARTER

This is to Certify that

FIRST METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

having made proper application through its duly authorized representatives for RENEWAL OF THE CHARTER ORIGINALLY GRANTED
JULY 31, 1925

Troop No. 3 of AUBURN, INDIANA

to carry out the program of the Boy Scouts of America for

CHARACTER BUILDING :: AMERICANIZATION :: CITIZENSHIP TRAINING

is hereby granted a charter for the year ending JULY 31, 1927 subject to the provisions of the Constitution and By-Laws and rules and regulations of the National Council of the Boy Scouts of America.

W. C. BAKER
JOHN ZIMMERMAN
ROY CARY
TROOP COMMITTEE

WILLIAM S. QUANCE
SCOUTMASTER

DEWEY SANDERS
ASSISTANT SCOUTMASTER

The above-mentioned officials, having been duly certified, are officially registered by the National Council to meet the responsibilities of their respective offices in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution and By-Laws of the Boy Scouts of America.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF the National Council of the Boy Scouts of America has caused this charter to be signed by its officers and its corporate seal to be affixed this 3RD day of DECEMBER, in the year 1926

HONORARY PRESIDENT

HONORARY VICE-PRESIDENT

PRESIDENT

HONORARY VICE-PRESIDENT

Dan Beard
NATIONAL SCOUT COMMISSIONER

HONORARY VICE-PRESIDENT

CHIEF SCOUT EXECUTIVE

"DO A GOOD TURN DAILY"

TRUSTWORTHY · LOYAL · HELPFUL · FRIENDLY · COURTEOUS · KIND · OBEDIENT · CHEERFUL · THRIFTY · BRAVE · CLEAN · REVERENT ·

This 1927 photo shows Boy Scout Troop Number 3 of Auburn on an outing along Cedar Creek. Glen appears seated, fourth from the right.

Glenn discovered an innate ability to get people to follow him.

He exhibited leadership outside the troop as well. "There were five or six of us that belonged to the Boy Scout Troop," he explained. "We'd go camping out to the woods quite a bit along Cedar Creek, what was then the old Marvin Stroh farm. We thought we'd like to have a cabin right by the Morningstar Bridge. We had grandiose ideas of how we were going to build it, but we didn't have any materials."

Glenn instinctively took charge of the project. "I was talking to my Dad about it one evening and he said, 'I know where there's a bunch of logs you probably can get. The city light people have a whole pile of old telephone poles in back of the jail.' So I went and talked to the superintendent of the power plant. I told him what we wanted. He said, 'Those poles don't mean anything to us. In fact, we'd like to get rid of them. Yeah, you can have them. But how you going to haul them out?' I said, 'We'll find a way!'"

Just east of Auburn lived a farmer named John Smith (his son, also named John Smith, still owned the land at the time of this writing) "John Sr. was quite a guy," said Glenn. "Where John Jr. is a church goer and wouldn't think of swearing, his dad never said two words without a cuss in between. I always said I learned all my cuss words from him!"

Glenn knew the elder John Smith used a long bobsled pulled by horses to haul hay out to his cattle. Glenn and several of the other Scouts approached him about moving the telephone poles. "I can haul the logs out for you!" Smith replied.

When school closed for the Christmas break, snow covered the ground. "The first day of our vacation, John Smith came in with a team of horses and his bobsled," said Glenn. "We helped him load the telephone poles on the bobsled, then we went out with him to the creek."

The boys spent the remainder of their Christmas holiday working on the club house. "We had a cross-cut saw we got from somebody and axes to cut our notches," said Glenn. The boys worked without plans. "I knew how a log cabin was built," Glenn explained. "We had slept in some log cabins out west, so I knew how they were chinked together and so forth. I never gave it a thought. We just went ahead and built it."

Although the boys didn't quite finish the project that vacation, by summer they had their clubhouse. Over time, they turned it into a young boy's dream, complete with a stove and table.

The clubhouse served as a bathhouse for summer swims. "We were within a couple yards of the bridge and right underneath was a deep hole in the creek. That was our swimming hole," said Glenn. "We'd go swimming there without any bathing suits on!"

Of course, swimming alfresco added an element of excitement. "If a car come along the road," said Glenn, "we'd dive underwater and slip under the bridge until they went by!"

* * *

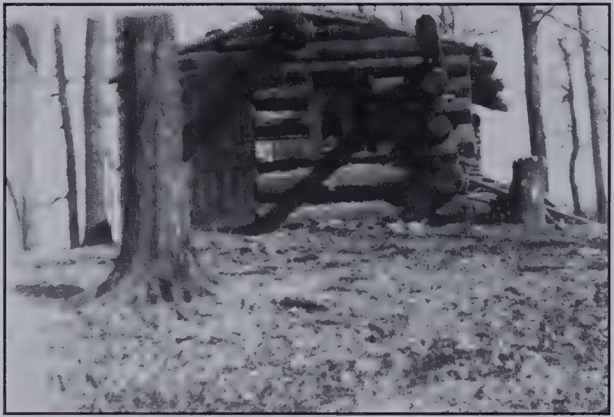
Despite finding happiness in Auburn, the Rieke family could never quite outrun tragedy. In 1926, it struck again.

Glenn's energetic five-year-old brother, Theodore Jr., fell ill. The doctors diagnosed spinal meningitis. "Spinal Meningitis isn't critical anymore, but in those days, they didn't know how to treat it," said Glenn. In another sign of the times, Dr. Dorsey Hines treated the boy in the Rieke home. Auburn at the time simply didn't have adequate hospital facilities.

The disease ran its course quickly. "He was only sick about a month or so," said Glenn. "It took him real fast." On May 22, 1926, Junior died in the Rieke home.

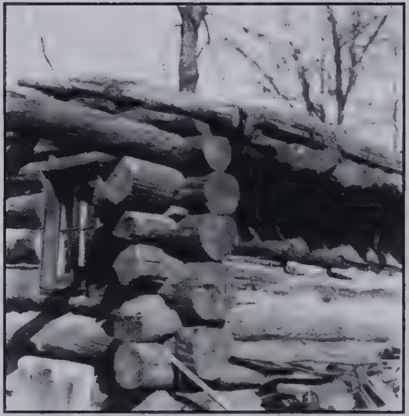
Mary again took the death of her young child hard.

Spring was just blossoming into lively summer when the Rieke family conducted their second burial ceremony in Woodlawn Cemetery. They hadn't yet lived in Auburn three years.



Cabin Fever

Glenn and his friends built their log clubhouse in a matter of weeks. These photos, taken after the building had begun to deteriorate, show impressive craftsmanship for carpenters so young. The above photo reveals that the clubhouse recycled a manufactured door. The below photo shows one of the cabin's notched corners in detail.



FORMATIVE YEARS
Chapter Eight

For Glenn, his family, the family's business, and the emerging field of aviation, the years 1926 to 1930 proved to be formative.

Glenn, who as a child had been at the mercy of trying circumstances, began to assert himself as a self-reliant young man. The family, used to so much upheaval, settled into a home with a mortgage instead of a lease. The company, accustomed to struggling for survival, took solid strides toward achieving its potential. And aviation, propelled by what were then mind-boggling individual accomplishments, roared into the public's consciousness.

* * *

Like many young men of that era, Glenn and his older brother, Irvin, grew fascinated with machines—the faster the better. Their maturation processes produced exciting learning experiences.

"After I got to be sixteen years old, I started driving Dad's cars," said Glenn. "He had two: a little Ford Coup—about a 1928 Model A, one of the first cars built after the Model T—and a big Apperson sedan, nicknamed a 'Jackrabbit' because it had a rabbit as a hood ornament."

Events surrounding TW's purchase of the Apperson produced a lively story. "One day we were at the lakes up north driving along a hill," said Glenn. "We were right behind the cottages when we saw a car down in the lake, its top stickin' out. Dad stopped to see what was wrong."

The Riekes found several people standing along the lake shore near the submerged automobile. In conversation that followed, the family learned the humorous, but frustrating situation. "Someone had parked the car up on top of the hill and forgot to set the brakes!" Glenn said. "It had rolled down into the water."

Of course, not everyone involved appreciated the humor of the situation. "The person who owned the car—it was practically brand new—was from Chicago," Glenn remembered. "He was disgusted. He didn't know what to do with the car."

As the conversation continued, TW got to thinking. Perhaps he recalled a somewhat similar scene years earlier in Minnesota, when the family's Model T collided with a streetcar, sending pots and pans rolling. The family had felt stuck with a dubious mode of transportation until a garage owner offered them an attractive alternative. "All we could see was the top sticking out of the water," Glenn recalled, "but Dad said, 'Do you want to sell it?'" The car owner turned his ear toward TW. A deal was struck and, for $200 cash, TW assumed the title of the soggy sedan.

TW, Glenn and Irvin managed to pull the car out of the water. Then they faced the next puzzle piece: how to get the crippled car home. "First we brought it into Angola and put it in the Golden Garage, right off the downtown circle," Glenn remembered. "The next day, Dad sent Irwin and I up to tow the car back to Auburn. We got my cousin, Leonard Rathert, who had another car, to do the towing."

About halfway between Angola and Waterloo, on State Road 427, the wheels came off the boys' plan. "The wooden spokes on one wheel busted," said Glenn. Since the boys didn't have another wheel, they faced a conundrum—they would have to go for help, but they didn't want to leave the car by itself.

Self-sufficient as always, the boys struck a plan. "I slept in the car all night to protect it," said Glenn. "Irv and my cousin went home and come back the next morning with a wheel so we could pull the car the rest of the way home."

The Apperson found a home in the garage of the Rieke's house on Van Buren Street. "Dad had it repainted and refurbished all the way through," Glenn recalled. "It was a nice family car."

* * *

The story of acquiring the sedan served as prologue to another tale. After establishing that the family owned two cars when he was a teen, Glenn told how he simultaneously managed to damage both.

"One night I and another boy from high school had Daddy's coup," Glenn began. "We had been up at the lakes and were coming back on the Ashley Road. Only about a quarter mile north of Auburn, we run out of gas. This was about 11 or 12 o'clock at night. All the gas stations were closed. We couldn't get gas, so I walked into town."

Glenn found his parents already asleep. He went into their bedroom, tapped TW on the shoulder, and said, "Dad, I run out of gas. I was wondering if I could borrow the Apperson?" TW grunted "Yup," and rolled over. Glenn went out to the garage, threw a rope into the Apperson—he intended to tow the Ford home—then drove the short distance to where the stranded coup waited.

"It was parked along the right-hand side of the road," said Glenn. "When we come up with this big Apperson, I had to turn around. I pulled into a farm's driveway and backed out onto the road to get close to the coupe." In the dark, Glenn couldn't quite see where he was going. Suddenly he heard a sickening crunch. "I had backed right into the side of the coupe on an angle!" he said. "Dented the Apperson's round back panel and done quite a bit of damage to the coupe."

Despite the mishap, the boys completed their mission and Glenn parked both cars in the garage. From his days of breaking windows with baseballs, he knew he had to tell his father the bad news right away. Even though it was well after midnight, he went in the bedroom again, tapped TW and said, "Dad, I had a little accident."

TW asked, "What happened?"

Now, Glenn felt bound to tell the truth, but not necessarily all the discouraging details. He simply said, "I backed into the coupe with the big car."

"Did you do much damage?" his father asked.

Glenn was sticking to his theory of least resistance. He knew he fudged the truth a bit when he said, "It's dark out so I can't tell, but I think I done a little damage."

"'Okay," TW said, turning over, 'We'll look at it in the morning."

The waking hours weren't over for Glenn. "I went to bed," he said. "but I knew I'd done more damage than I let on. I laid there and tossed most of the night." In his agitated state, Glenn heard the first stirrings the next morning when his father got out of bed. "I hurried and got dressed too," he recalled, "because I knew there was going to be trouble."

Glenn hustled downstairs and arrived in the kitchen just as his father went out the back door for the short walk to the garage. Glenn turned to his mother and said, "I'm going to be in for it!"

The teenager was in for a surprise. After a short while, TW came back in, sat down at the breakfast table, and didn't say a word! The silence was deafening to Glenn's guilty conscience. "I couldn't stand it," he said. Finally, he blurted out, "How much damage did I do?"

Once again, Glenn would learn how fair and generous his father could be. "You done a little damage," said TW. "But it can be repaired. I don't think you done it on purpose."

That was it!

Seventy years after the event, Glenn leaned back in his chair, put his hands in the air and said, "That's all he said. He never mentioned it again to me!"

* * *

Whenever machines of transportation and the town of Auburn get mentioned in the same sentence, an introduction to Big Wild Bill Fitzsimmons can't be far behind.

Guy Fitzsimmons came to Auburn to work as a test driver for the Auburn Automobile Company. He later earned a nationally-known nickname for chasing speed records on the ground and performing acrobatics in the air.

Bill's fascination with flying could be traced back to aviation's historic roots. In 1905, at only 15 years of age, Bill drove a buddy on the back of his motorcycle to the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. There, on one stop of their national tour, the Wright Brothers would demonstrate the latest incarnation of the world's first-ever, heavier than air, self-propelled flying machine.

Despite accomplishing what is now considered an epochal success two years earlier at Kitty Hawk, in 1905 the Wrights struggled against public indifference. Although based on the brothers' impressive, original research, their flying machines struck most Americans as impractical, dangerous flights of fancy. When Bill saw one—a year in which the brothers' invention would set a new record flight covering 24 miles while airborne 39 minutes—the Wrights still had not received a patent! The demonstration in Indianapolis was part of a struggle the brothers endured over several years to gain recognition for their accomplishments.

Arriving on the Speedway grounds in helmets, goggles and leggings, Guy and his friend slipped past security guards who assumed they were part of the Wrights' show. The teens found Wilbur and Orville busily preparing for the demonstration, so the boys introduced themselves and volunteered to help.

To get this early airplane into the air, the Wrights employed what amounted to a large slingshot. The plane was attached by cable to a 1,500-pound weight. When the weight dropped from a tower, the plane rode on runners over an inclined ramp before jumping off on its own. To reduce friction, the Wrights used a very low-tech substance—grease—on the runners. With a grease swab in hand, Guy Fitzsimmons began what would be a long aviation career at the very bottom.

The dirty work, though, provided him with a front row seat to the demonstration. The flight would not go down in history as one of the Wright brothers' best; the plane climbed to a height of 50 feet, made one circle and landed. Still, Guy felt his heart pounding. He had fallen in love with flying!

Some time after the Indianapolis visit, Guy made his way to another pioneering transportation town of the era, Kokomo, Indiana. There he went to work for an early automobile promoter named Bill Eikenberry (in one of many tie-ins between disparate parts of this story, Eikenberry sold Haynes-Apperson products). Eikenberry counted among his friends Auburn's own Morris Eckhart (the man who built the Rieke's Van Buren Street home). In 1910, Eikenberry made arrangements with Eckhart for young Guy to test drive cars for the Auburn Automobile Company.

Guy didn't like his given first name and in later interviews claimed he refused to even mention it upon his arrival in Auburn. Not knowing how to address the young man, Auburn Auto employees began to call him "Bill," referring to his former boss, Eikenberry. To avoid confusion with a smaller employee by the same name, they referred to Fitzsimmons as "Big Bill."

The test driving job proved to be temporary while the change of address and nickname did not. Big Bill lived the rest of his life in Auburn.

In 1915, Fitzsimmons went to work as a truck driver for Auburn Foundry and BO Fink. At the time, the foundry daily made multiple deliveries to Fort Wayne, the big city 25 miles south of Auburn. To gain efficiency, BO and Bill drove to Detroit one day to look at a brand-new concept in industrial transportation. Running on solid rubber tires, the new Fruehof semi-tractor/trailer trucks could carry 15 tons—an amazing load for the time.

BO bought what some sources claim was the first Fruehof rig off the assembly line and for years Bill made three trips to Fort Wayne each work day.

* * *

Traveling in the opposite direction along the same route, news of aviation accomplishments by Fort Wayne's "Bird Boy" reached Auburn.

Glenn's health scares family

The year after Junior's death, Glenn nearly became the third Rieke boy to suffer an early demise.

"I took sick on the Fourth of July, 1927. We were at a party and I didn't feel well," he remembered. "When I got home, I went to the doctor." Old Doctor Hines' diagnosis: consumption—what is today known as tuberculosis.

The infectious disease was so common, earlier generations called it the "White Plague." Germs responsible for the disease could be transmitted through unpasteurized milk or humans already infected. Children proved to be particularly susceptible. The disease could lie dormant for years before attacking. In most cases, it went for the victim's lungs. Symptoms included chronic fatigue, coughing, and aching joints.

Although a vaccine had been developed in France in 1924, not until the early 1940s would a new generation of drugs find widespread acceptance in the United States. For treatment up until that time, sufferers went to tuberculosis treatment centers.

During Glenn's visit to Fort Wayne's Irene Byron Sanitarium, doctors drained several quarts of fluid from his lungs. Then, when the teen returned home, Dr. Hines prescribed an old fashioned treatment—complete bed rest. "I laid in bed from the Fourth of July until the night before Thanksgiving," Glenn said.

Like fellow physicians of the time, Dr. Hines believed TB patients needed lots of fresh air. He suggested Glenn live and sleep out-of-doors. So the family fixed up living quarters for the 15-year-old on their Van Buren Street home's screened-in side porch, which faced Fourth Street. "That was my cage for three or four months," Glenn said with a chuckle.

Although Glenn played down the episode, the illness would crop up again in his medical history. "The TB bug still shows up in my medical tests," he said. "But apparently it's arrested to the point where it's no longer a danger."

In 1910, 20-year-old Art Smith began building an "aeroplane" from plans he bought by mail order. On October 11, 1911, Smith successfully completed man's first flight in northeast Indiana, flying from Fort Wayne to New Haven and back.

Not long afterward, Smith and his fiance, Aimee, attempted to become "the first couple in the world to elope in an aeroplane." They planned to fly from Fort Wayne to Hillsdale, Michigan, for clandestine nuptials. Unfortunately, Smith became the first area person to crash a plane when his craft turned onto its top in a field southwest of Auburn. The young couple and their craft survived in repairable shape and, in fact, completed the flight to Hillsdale. There Art and Aimee became man and wife, although an asterisk needs to be added alongside their entry into the record book: the first couple to elope by plane spoke their vows while laying in adjacent hospital beds.

Smith fit the common description of early flyers. He loved the edge of danger, the fly-by-the-seat-of-your-pants mindset. Courting death in aviation's formative years had its rewards. About the time Big Bill Fitzsimmons went to work for Auburn Foundry, Smith began a series of stunt-flying exhibitions that took him around the world.

* * *

After Bill Fitzsimmons helped the Wright brothers in Indianapolis, the inventors asked if he'd like to travel with them. The only pay the position offered would be living expenses plus a chance to learn to fly. Fitzsimmons immediately telephoned his father back in Russiaville with the great news. The father wasn't nearly as thrilled as the son. "You get on that motorcycle, get right home and get to school!" he ordered.

The dream didn't die, though, and in 1921, Bill finally answered his destiny. He began to take flying lessons at the exorbitant fee of $35 per hour. In 1926, with the financial assistance of BO Fink, Bill bought his first airplane, a Waco 10.

Since the nearest established airport to Auburn was Paul Baer Airport in Fort Wayne, Bill kept his plane there. On weekends, he'd fly to his home town and land in the field where Dana Corporation Spicer Clutch Division now stands. Later, Bill moved his airstrip to a field next to the DeKalb County Farm and, later still, to a field just east of the Ashley Road.

It was at this last "farmer's field" that Glenn first met Fitz. "Bill used to take off and land in this field when he'd take passengers up for a ride," Glenn recalled. "He took me for a couple of rides."

About this time, Bill talked to a Detroit friend who test-flew airplanes. The man asked if Bill had ever put his plane in a spin. Fitzsimmons said no. Years later, Bill recounted the man's reply: "One of these times (your plane) is going out of control with you and, if you've never (spun) one, you'll kill yourself because you won't know what to do!"

Shortly afterward, Bill paid a Fort Wayne flight instructor $35 to accompany him in a spin. To climb to the required altitude took 45 minutes in the instruction plane, an old World War I-vintage "Jenny." After a few mistakes and some anxious moments, Big Bill pulled the plane out of a self-induced spin while dropping from 3,000 feet to 1,000 feet above ground. When he landed, the instructor got out of the plane and encouraged Bill to go ahead and try another spin—this time flying solo. Only later did Bill learn his instructor had never before been part or pilot of a spin.

Guy "Wild Bill" Fitzsimmons

Despite the instructor's lack of confidence, the experience proved an epiphany to Bill. He came to the conclusion that to overcome his fear of being out of control, he needed to be able to fly a plane in any emergency situation. On his own he began to experiment by placing the plane in impossible situations and learning to regain control. As his confidence grew, so did his fame.

Around 1928, Bill began to perform in aerial stunt shows. His unique acrobatics added to his nickname. The man known as Big Bill became "Big Wild Bill Fitzsimmons."

* * *

The drone of Big Wild Bill's airplane could easily be heard at 1600 North Main Street. In the brand new home lived Errett Lobban Cord and his family. At the time, Cord's star was rising fast.

A phenomenal car salesman, Cord sat on a mountain of cash when he visited the struggling Auburn Automobile Company in the summer of 1924. The owners, known by the nickname of the Chicago Gang, salivated for his young talent. They offered the 29-year-old a top management position and hefty salary, for they believed he could staunch the flow of red ink.

Cord refused the generous offer. Then he he made one of his own: he would work for the company if given total management control; then, when deficits turned to profits, he would use the gains to buy out the Chicago Gang. In other words, Auburn Automobile would be his alone!

Upset at Cord's audacity, the financiers nonetheless relented. What else could they do? The company was heading down the road traveled by so many other independent car makers—toward oblivion.

With a combination of flashy paint jobs, enhanced performance, and aggressive promotion, Cord jump-started sales. In November of 1925, a little over a year after he arrived, he used profits to take total ownership of Auburn Automobile.

Despite the success, Cord didn't let up on the accelerator. In 1926 he bought the Indianapolis carmaker Duesenberg Automobile & Motor Company. It was the first move of many designed to create a transportation empire.

Up until this point, other than the drone near his home, Cord gave airplanes little thought. An acquaintance once quoted him as saying of aircraft, "Those things? They'll never last."

In 1927, he changed his mind. While in Miami attending a meeting, Cord impulsively stepped in when a friend defaulted on a deal to buy a Stinson airplane. Rearranging his schedule, Cord stayed several extra days in Florida to take flying lessons in his new plane. Then, with the help of a co-pilot, he flew the Stinson home and landed near his home in the field Bill Fitzsimmons used as an airstrip.

Airports played name game

Circumstances silly, tragic and trying added up to a confusion of airport names in Fort Wayne.

The first airfield was founded north of the city in 1925. Its name—Paul Baer Airport–honored a Fort Wayne native and America's first World War I flying ace. A few years after Art Smith's 1926 tragic death while flying a U.S. airmail route, the airport honored him as well by renaming the airport Smith-Baer Field.

When military necessity opened a larger airport on the city's south side in the early 1940s, local officials wanted to name it Anthony Wayne Field. But the War Department insisted that the name honor a flier who had served in the U.S. Air Corps. An impasse resulted.

Finally, local officials found a solution. They chose to call the south airport Baer Field and once again renamed the original airstrip. To this day that small airport honors the Summit City's original Bird Boy with its name–Smith Field.

Three months later, Charles Lindbergh flew solo across the Atlantic. Aviation skeptics—which included the majority of Americans—suddenly saw the light. Airplanes might have a commercial future after all! Ever on the lookout for a financial trend, Cord jumped into the aviation business with both feet.

One day, Bill Fitzsimmons flew his Waco 10 up from Fort Wayne and landed in the field near Cord's home. The "airstrip" was decorated with rags which Bill tied to stumps he wanted to avoid and a pole stuck in a haystack—his windsock. As Bill fussed about his plane, a short man in knickers, cap and white suit suddenly appeared.

"Hey, Fitz!" the man said, "Could this be made into an airport?"

Bill pointed out that the field needed a runway and other improvements; in other words, it wouldn't be his first choice to locate an airport. Despite Bill's lack of endorsement, the short stranger appeared again the following week and announced to Bill, "I bought this field and I'm making an airport out of it!"

Someone saw the two men together and asked Bill how he knew E.L. Cord. That's how Fitzsimmons learned the identity of the short stranger.

* * *

Cord proved true to his word. He bought the land from Auburn Automobile executive J.I. Farley and hired Rollo Muhn (a local contractor who's name peppers later pages of this book) to build a hangar. The auto titan named his aviation creation Cord Airport.

During his first few years in Auburn, Cord still held the community's favor. Although personally shy in public and too absorbed in business to socialize often, Cord's personable first wife, Helen, made up for her husband's shortcomings. Fitzsimmons remembered the man fondly. The auto titan always reserved space at no charge for Bill's plane in the new hangar.

In 1928, Cord bought Stinson Aircraft Company, located just a few hours north in Michigan. Almost simultaneously he formed a company charged with producing inexpensive transport planes.

Then Helen Cord, just 37 years old, died of cancer on September 13, 1930.

On the surface, Helen's death barely seemed to bother EL. He remarried within four months and didn't slow his business pace at all. Yet hindsight and comments he later made indicate his wife's death affected him deeply.

Right after Helen died, Cord cut virtually all ties to Auburn. First, he moved the family out of its Main Street home. More significantly for the community, Cord virtually ignored automaking from this time on. He turned most of his attention to his new love, aviation.

* * *

While Cord pulled the strings of his corporate empire and Wild Bill soared, Glenn attended Auburn's McIntosh High School.

A self-described "average student," Glenn chose teachers and classes that fell in line with his interests and served as testimony to his father's influence. "The teacher I liked best was old Isaac Cosper, the manual training teacher," said Glenn. "He insisted upon accuracy. That had the biggest impression on me: if you were going to do something, do it right!"

Glenn (back row, center) was an active member of McIntosh High School's class of 1930. He already exhibited a talent for leadership.

Glenn participated in intramural sports, but did not play for the teams that competed against other schools. Nor did his social life particularly shine. "I dated Mary Ann McDowell in high school. Her father was the judge of the Circuit Court in Auburn," Glenn remembered. "I took her to the junior prom. That was my first and last date with her."

However in two areas—leadership and maturity—Glenn stood out from the high school crowd. "I helped start the 'YMCA Noon League,'" he said. "Once a week we'd go down to the Y, have a baked bean lunch and join in an hour of athletics of some kind—basketball usually."

As a member of the school's public speaking team, Glenn excelled in local competitions and became the area's representative in a state meet held at Franklin College, in Franklin, Indiana. "I didn't do very good, as I recall," he said with a chuckle.

With each experience—whether successful or not—Glenn found others looking to him, willing to follow his lead.

Part of this respect came through Glenn's mature choices. He was a young man who knew what he wanted to do, then took steps to accomplish it. This attitude could be seen in his teenage choice of professions. "Ever since I was a young fellow, I marveled at the way they built bridges," Glenn said. While yet in high school, he decided he would attend college to study the design and management of bridge construction.

Class hands luggage to Lash

Glenn graduated from McIntosh High School in 1930, the same year as the school's legendary track man, Don Lash.

Lash went on to set records at Indiana University. In 1936, he competed in the Olympic Games best remembered for Jesse Owen's repudiation of Aryan superiority.

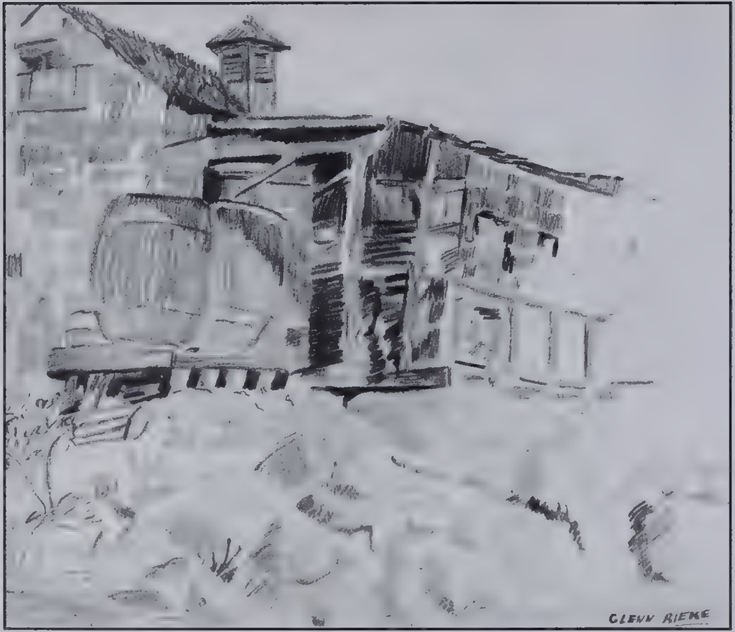
When Lash got off the ship in Germany, he carried a little bit of Auburn with him. "We had a young men's club formed by college graduates. We called it the Hickory Club," Glenn explained. "When Lash was going overseas, we presented him with a set of luggage."

Glenn's grown-up approach to life continued when school let out. "I worked at the plant during summers for about three years," he said. Like his father and brother, Glenn never punched a clock. "We didn't have a set time to go to work or a set time to go home," he said. "We worked until the job was done. If that meant 5 o'clock in the morning until 10 o'clock at night, that's what we would do."

If the young man needed inspiration in how to work hard in order to make a dream come true, he only needed to look across the factory floor to his father. "The whole while I was in school, my dad was going through the toughest years of trying to get the business started," according to Glenn.

In 1930, the effects of the Great Depression were just beginning to wash over Auburn. Bucking the trend, RMPC during that same time took positive steps forward. In a spirit of optimism—buoyed in part by Glenn's high school graduation—the family decided it was time for a summer treat. They hopped in the family's 8-cylinder Auburn sedan ("The fastest car of its day!" according to Glenn) and TW, Mary, Mahlon and Glenn drove to California.

The trip had several objectives: Mary wished to see her sister, Carol Gibson, who lived with her family on a Golden State olive farm. The family also could visit Julius Lehfeldt, brother of Montana sheepherder Hans, who's family ran an inn near the entrance of Sequoia National Park.



Glenn dabbled in drawing during his high school days. During this time, he intended to make a career out of designing and building bridges.

Finally, Glenn could use the trip to get a look at construction on the Golden Gate Bridge, then beginning to span the land gap at the mouth of San Francisco Bay.

Traveling cross-country in America in 1930 promised to be an adventure. As recently as 1927, the Lincoln Highway had finally connected its constituent parts to form the country's first transcontinental road. Even then, not all of the Lincoln's 3, 385 miles were paved.

Up until the Lincoln, America's roads were basically dirt paths which radiated out of a town and seldom led anywhere. Stagecoach lines had established roads between some cities and prompted improvements such as corduroy roads (logs laid side by side with a covering of dirt), but when trains took over in the last half of the Nineteenth Century, the need for good, long-distance roads declined.

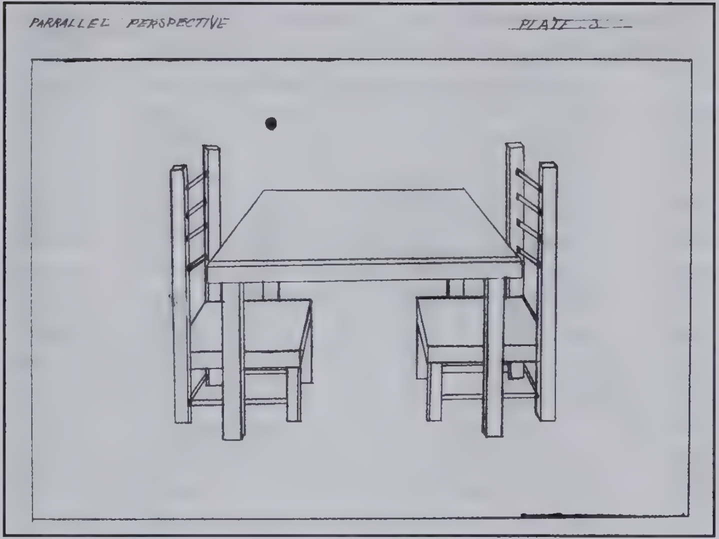
When automobiles rattled onto the scene in the 1910s, roads again grew in importance. As the Riekes found in the trek out of Montana, though, rain turned these "roads" to mush. Even in the best of conditions, unpaved roads provided uncomfortable travel by car.

Indiana's own Carl Fisher conceived the idea of a "highway" stretching across the entire country in 1912. He tried to raise funds privately, selling individual memberships to the public for five dollars. Yet he hoped industry would provide most of the money. In general, businesses did back the plan, but no one could convince the man whose support was most needed. Lacking Henry Ford's blessing, the national highway project continually gasped for funds.

In 1913, to help stimulate public interest, Henry Joy, president of the Packard Motor Car Company, suggested naming the road after Abraham Lincoln. The idea of giving roads personal names caught the nation's attention. This led to a colorful but confusing stretch of American travel history when every byway boasted a personal name and color. When several highways shared the same roadway—which they often did—telephone poles might be striped top to bottom with color-coded signs to further confuse travelers.

To combat the cacophony, in November of 1925 the American Association of State Highway Officials in Superhighways put into place the current highway numbering system. The Lincoln Highway was chopped into several numbered routes, but two thirds of its length remains today as U.S. 30.

Despite improvements, roads of 1930 could not be compared to modern freeways. The concept of "superhighways"—roadways which eliminate stops for cross traffic and train tracks—still were a concept not yet put into practice.



Also during high school, Glenn tried his first technical drawings. He would develop this skill at Purdue and use it extensively once he joined the family business.

In other words, the small number of travelers who attempted to cross the country by car were virtual transportation pioneers. "Yeah, my folks were adventurous," said Glenn when asked about the "vacation." "They weren't afraid to try a trip like that."

The promise of adventure came true. The first incident took place in July when the family sedan reached the Rocky Mountains.

"At that time, the road was no more than a loggers' trail cut out of the sheer walls of the mountain," said Glenn. "There were no guard rails. The road slanted on an angle toward the mountain to keep vehicles from going over the edge and it was only wide enough for one automobile. About every three or four hundred yards, the road had been cut into the mountain wide enough for two cars to pass. That way, if you rounded a corner and met another car coming at you, one of you could back up to a cut out and let the other car pass!"

In addition to treacherous roads, weather conditions in the mountains added an element of danger.

All of the bad conditions seemed to converge one day. "We were following 150 feet behind another car, a coupe, with a man and woman in it," said Glenn, setting the scene. "There was snow and slush on the road. It was a little slippery. We were just creeping along."

After a couple of monotonous hours, events turned harrowing in a split second. "We got within about a mile of the top of the mountain, coming up to Birthoud Pass 11,315 feet above sea level, when suddenly the car ahead got too far to the right on a turn," Glenn explained. "The two outside wheels went over the sharp rock ledge. The wheels were hanging in the air, spinning!

Glenn jumped out of the Rieke's car and ran to the driver's side door of the endangered car. "The woman in the passenger seat was screaming to high heaven," remembered Glenn. "She was trying to climb over her husband because she was hanging over a drop of several thousand feet. You could see the clouds below!"

In such a precarious position, even a tiny mishap could lead to catastrophe. Despite the panic of the victims, Glenn kept his head. "Both of them were elderly, heavy-set people," he said. "As a result of the woman trying to climb over her husband, he couldn't get his door open. So I opened the door and pulled them out onto the road."

Relief swept over everyone, but the accident left them shaken. "You could imagine how petrified that couple was," Glenn recounted. "They went back and set in our car."

Although the immediate danger had passed, the mishap left a problem to resolve. "Of course, we couldn't move because their car blocked the road!" Glenn said. "The only thing we could do was set there until enough people come along to help us move it."

With time to kill, Glenn examined the elderly couple's car. "I wondered what the devil was holding that car from going on over the edge," he said. "I looked, and about three inches from the edge of the cliff, the bolt head on the transmission drain plug had caught onto the rock and stuck. The car was balancing on that point, with only two wheels on the road. That's all that kept it from going over the side!"

After about two hours, the stranded travelers accumulated enough people power to virtually lift the car back onto the roadway. In addition to the sheer strength needed, the action required nerve. "We were afraid to hold onto the car, afraid it would pull us over!" Glenn explained.

Amazing as it may seem, once the car was back on the road, the elderly couple resumed their drive. "I don't know how they did it, but they got in their car again and crept to the top of the mountain," Glenn recalled.

Near the summit sat a ranger station. Advised of even worse conditions further down the road, all the travelers decided to call it a day. "We, along with about eight or ten other people, including this elderly couple, stayed in the ranger station that night," said Glenn. The unexpected guests made their beds on the station floor.

The next morning, the Riekes rerouted their trip. "The ranger told us the road going down the other side of the mountain was impassable," Glenn explained. "They said at a part of the road called 'Muddy Pass' about 50 cars were stranded. It was impossible to get by."

Only one way out remained open. "We could take a road north to the top of the mountain—this ranger station already was at 12,500 feet elevation—and come down on another road," said Glenn. "So we took the trail north."

Nerves remained taut, but no more accidents occurred. "It wasn't a very good road, but we took it anyways," said Glenn. "We finally got down the other side and rolled into Salt Lake City. We were damn glad to get out of the mountains!"

* * *

Upon reaching the West Coast, the family first stopped in San Francisco. "I was headed to Purdue University that fall to study bridge design," said Glenn, explaining the bay visit. "The first thing I wanted to see was the bridge going up over the entrance to San Francisco harbor—the Golden Gate bridge."

TW and Mary allowed their son to satisfy his curiosity. "I marveled at its design. We went back and forth over the bridge a couple of times just to inspect it," said Glenn. "That was the highlight of my trip!"

The family then turned south, enjoying a beautiful drive along the Pacific coast. Although California and its sights top many current vacation lists, it must be remembered that in 1930 the state was not the populous, glamorous, trend-setter we know today. California then had no professional sports teams. Aside from its vital port cities, the state had yet to develop national business importance. Growing perishable produce didn't make sense because transportation was limited to only a few roads and rails. Commercial air service had barely gotten off the ground.

In other words, besides the beaches and weather, very little enticed travelers toward the extreme West Coast, and few attractive transportation options offered to take them there. For the most part, California was as exotic and remote as a foreign country.

Being acquainted with California's glamour queen—Los Angeles—in later years, Glenn appreciated his first introduction all the more. "After we passed the city limits sign going south, it felt like we drove another 30 or 40 miles before we saw any habitation," he remembered. "I don't think there was a building in Los Angeles more than three stories high! It was a very small community."

Although Hollywood was just gaining momentum, the Rieke family got to rub elbows with the emerging film industry. "We visited a friend from Montana whose brother owned a neighboring homestead to ours," Glenn explained. "This boy, Bob Fleming, had grown up in Montana, but later went to California and joined the movies. He played western parts. He and Tom Mix run around together."

A bachelor, Fleming lived in a one-room apartment. Despite limited accommodations, he entertained the Rieke family for two days. "He had all kind of pictures around the walls of his different parts that he played," Glenn recalled. "He told us about his experiences making silent movies. He had grown a great, big bushy beard and long hair to get ready for a part in another movie."

Glenn never got to see Fleming on the big screen. "The closest we come was seeing his name on a billboard," he said. "Bob was not a star. He was a bit player. His life was either feast or famine. When we were there, he was sitting by the telephone, waiting for a call."

If Fleming struggled to make an impression on celluloid, he possessed other skills which the teenager admired even more. "He was a real cowboy," said Glenn. "He had gone to Hollywood because he thought it would be easier to make a living there than it would on a homestead."

With their visits and sightseeing over, the Riekes turned their car east. Although they avoided the Rockies on the return trip, by taking the south route—America's Main Street, the legendary Route 66—they couldn't avoid danger altogether.

"Our car was not air-conditioned," Glenn explained. "Yet it was so hot in Death Valley, we closed the windows! We couldn't stand the hot air blowing in on us." Imagine closing the windows of an uncooled car in the worst of an Indiana heat wave! That, according to Glenn, could only begin to describe the discomfort. "The air was just stifling inside," he said. "You couldn't hardly breath!"

After passing through the valley of death, the trip home went smoothly. The family arrived from their adventures back in Auburn just in time for Glenn to pack his bags for college.

As he busily prepared for yet another exciting new phase of his life, Glenn caught up on local news with his brother Irvin. While Glenn could tell of the family's highs and lows during a cross country trip, Irvin could add a few of his own that that had taken place right in Auburn.

In the warm months of 1930, taking off from Cord Airport and under the tutelage of Bill Fitzsimmons, Irvin had learned to fly!

PEG

Chapter Nine

Just a few weeks after the Riekes arrived on their Montana homestead, an event which eventually would have a profound effect on the family took place back in Indiana. On July 11, 1910, at the tiny crossroads town of West Point, Thelma Agnes Layden was born. For reasons all his own, the baby's father nicknamed her "Peg."

The Layden family—Lawrence, his wife Ima, Thelma, 4-year-old Bernard and three-year-old Carl—lived surrounded by relatives. Two generations earlier, John Layden, a native of Feakle, settled in Ireland's County Clare. His sons—John, Michael and Tade—emigrated to America and made their homes near Attica, Indiana. Following the tradition of their family, they farmed the land. Once in the new country, Michael sired Lawrence.

Lawrence married Ima in 1904. They first settled on the West Point farm, near Attica, just southwest of LaFayette. Up through Thelma's arrival, the Layden family's story followed a script acted out by countless other extended immigrant farm families in countless other rural American settings.

Lawrence, though, wasn't willing to live by a pre-ordained plan. Before Thelma turned a year old, he moved his family to a farm 150 miles to the north, near Churubusco. "Dad just decided he wanted to get away from the rest of the family," explained Thelma. "So we took off!"

Surviving photos show the Churubusco farm boasted a fairly new L-shaped house and schnitzel bank (two-level) barn. There's no record whether Lawrence put in a crop that summer of 1911, but pressure to keep the family's income flowing would have been high. "When I was born, Mother had a son five years old and another one three years old. Fifteen months after I was born, she had twin sons," said Thelma with a laugh. "She might as well had all of us at one time!"

Sadly, within 11 months one of the twins born that first fall in Churubusco succumbed to what was then called "blue heart." "He had a weak heart," said Thelma. "Now infants recover from it, but then it was fatal."

In the five years after the twins' birth, the family again grew twice, providing Thelma with a younger sister and another younger brother. The Layden children who survived to adulthood numbered six.

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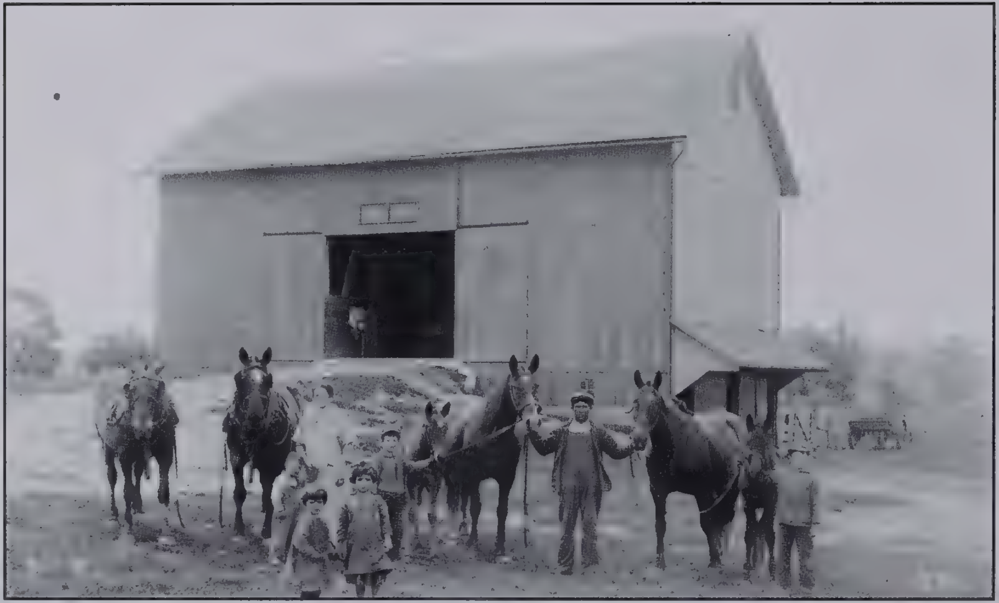


In this 1915 photo, Lawrence shows off the Layden family's horses. The barn of the Churubusco farm appears almost new. The children i n the photo are, from left: Albert (holding Ima's hand), Mary standing next to Thelma, and Carl and Bernard helping their father hold the horses.

When the Laydens moved to Churubusco, they most likely took the train. Automobiles were just beginning to bump along back Indiana roads. Ironically, the family's new home gave them a front row seat to automobile history.

"We lived on the old Lincoln Highway," remembered Thelma. " I can remember it being built!"

Carl Fisher, as introduced earlier, originally conceived of America's first transcontinental automobile roadway as a private enterprise. Completion depended on business donations and community cooperation. Organizers

Near Churubusco, Indiana, the Laydens lived in a typical L-shaped Indiana farmhouse with an addition to the back. Although this photo appears to have been taken at the same time as the one on the previous page, the family apparently wanted it to be a little more formal. The boys have taken off their hats and jackets. Lawrence has put on a dress coat and tie. Thelma, at center, has a large ribbon in her hair.

asked county and township governments along the chosen route to donate labor and materials. Construction began in October of 1914.

"People went by our farm doing all kinds of things!" Thelma remembered. "Each county took care of building their section of the road." Horse-powered slip scrapers and graders formed the road bed.

At that time, an "improved road" meant only that the roadway's bare earth sloped downward from a high center to prevent water from accumulating. Only small, indiscriminate sections of the Lincoln would be paved. Hoping to recruit public sentiment—and finances—to his side, Fisher believed if enough people were able to experience a cement roadway, they'd demand more.

Vast stretches of Lincoln Highway through Indiana would remain dirt for some time to come, yet the road ranks in historical significance alongside the Wabash-Erie Canal and Jim Hill's railroad. It ushered America into the automobile age.

To young Thelma, the highway's benefits were purely practical. "By the time I was six and went to school, we had a good road," she said.

Thelma entered first grade in one of the then-common Indiana country-corner schools. "We went to an old one-room school about a mile or two down the road," she remembered. Despite the improved roadway, the family depended on traditional means of transportation. "Dad took us by horse and buggy on bad days," said Thelma, "and we walked part of the time."

Memories at Churubusco would be few. "That farm proved much less productive than the black loam they left earlier," remembered Thelma. Cut off

The Layden Family

- Bernard Francis, December 5, 1905 to November 24, 1986
- Carl Joseph, July 30, 1907 to December 5, 1985
- Thelma Agnes, July 11, 1910
- Albert Vincent, October 17, 1911 to August 26, 1992
- Robert Vincent, October 17, 1911 to September 19, 1912
- Mary Magdaleu, March 3, 1913
- Lawrence Edward, April 8, 1916

from the support of their extended families, Lawrence and Ima found little to break their fall. “It wasn’t working out,” Thelma said. “Dad wasn’t making a living.” When Lawrence’s father encouraged him to return to a farm near West LaFayette, Lawrence agreed.

Once again the family packed their belongings. Ima, the four younger children, some livestock, household items and farm machinery traveled by train. Lawrence, Bernard and Carl followed in the family’s old touring car. Two of Lawrence’s brothers came last by horse and wagon, loaded down with the rest of the family’s worldly possessions.

They landed on 172 acres of land about 10 miles northeast of LaFayette. At the time, area folk called the community “Hebron.” In later years the Layden farm could be found by its Tippecanoe County address of 6417N-375W. Lawrence and Ima would live on the farm the rest of their lives.

Six years old at the time, Thelma retained only one lasting impression of the move back to the land of her parents’ families. “We didn't get there until March and school would be out in April, so my folks decided I didn't need to go to school. Then the truant officer called on us!” Thelma laughed. “I went to school the next day.”

Thelma would receive the remaining eleven years of her primary and secondary education in local schools. “We walked a half mile to get on a horse-drawn hack run by the township, which took us to the Hebron School,” she remembered. “The school had two rooms. We used both rooms when I started, but by the time I graduated from the eighth grade, we were all in one room.”

At first, Wayne Township—in which Hebron sat—had no high school. Thelma’s two older brothers received their secondary education at Montmorenci, a school five miles further away in Shelby Township.

By this time, Fisher’s vision had been fulfilled. The public had recognized the need for improved roads and Henry Ford’s Model T made automobiles affordable to virtually all Americans. The automobile age spread into every corner of the country.

Although they had given up their front seat to auto history, the Laydens couldn’t help being caught up in the transportation revolution. “About their

Daddy Layden liked nicknames

Just as he nicknamed Thelma “Peg,” Lawrence Layden gave his other children unusual monikers.

“My sister Mary was ‘Puddin.’ and my brothers were ‘Buster’ and ‘Bud,’” Thelma recalled.

The names would stick with the children all their lives. “‘Peg’ is all I went by from the time I can remember,” said Thelma. “I was never called anything else at home.”

From the beginning of their marriage, Glenn fell into the habit of using his wife’s nickname in place of her given name. After 65 years, he still kidded her about it.

When Thelma was asked where the nickname “Peg” came from, Glenn quipped, “That’s what her Dad called his cows!”

sophomore year, Dad got my brothers a car," said Thelma. Just owning an automobile, however, did not guarantee dependable transportation. "They were always having trouble with that car!" said Thelma, laughing. "Every weekend, that whole car was torn apart. Then they'd wait till Monday morning to get it ready to go to school!"

Thelma depended on her brothers for a ride. She began her freshman year at Montmorenci just as her two older brothers entered the senior class. They took her to school that first year, but–despite their efforts–couldn't help Thelma after that. "My brother tried to teach me how to drive a Model T Ford, but I never mastered it," said Thelma. "I never could hit those three pedals!"

Fortunately, when Thelma began her sophomore year, her younger brother entered Montmorenci as a freshman. To his big sister's relief and chagrin, Albert could handle the clutch in the Model T. "He drove most of the time. Then when I had to go alone—he was sick or something—I would drive the Dodge, our family's late-model car," Thelma explained. "It had semi-automatic gears."

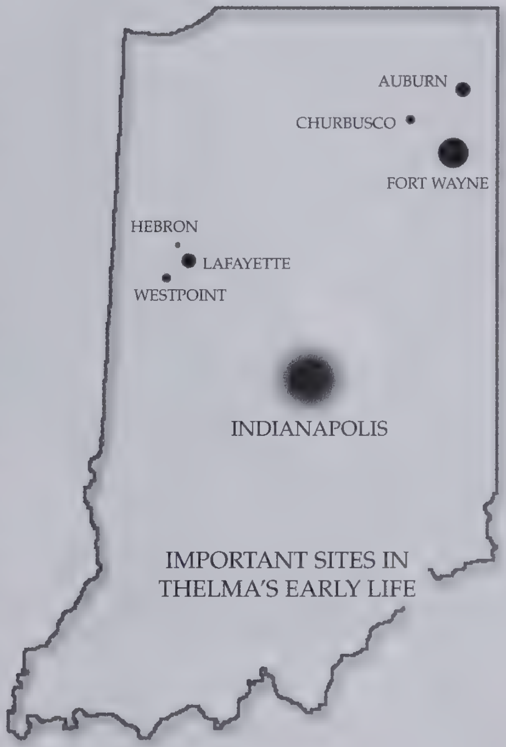
In addition to driving arrangements, the elements presented transportation challenges—especially so in the winter. "We lived in a snow belt," Thelma said. "We commonly had snow up over the fence posts."

After Thelma's second year at Montmorenci, her travel anxiety eased. "Between my sophomore and junior years, our township built the Klondike High School," Thelma explained. "We transferred and I went there my junior and senior years."

* * *

Once Thelma arrived at school, she still faced a question of which direction to take. Young women in the 1920's who looked ahead often saw only limited career options. "The boys went on the farm and the girls got married or taught," said Thelma matter-of-factly. Up until her last year in high school, Thelma planned to follow the flow. "I liked math. I hated history. But history and math seemed to go together so I wanted to be a math and history teacher," she said.

Then, like her father, she suddenly decided to swim against the main current. "My last year in high school, I did typing for the principal," said Thelma. She discovered both talent and satisfaction in the work. She



IMPORTANT SITES IN THELMA'S EARLY LIFE

changed her career goal and decided to develop skills in office work.

In the spring of 1928, Thelma received her diploma along with the other members of Klondike High School's second graduating class. In the fall of that year, she entered Fort Wayne's International Business College.

The business school resided in a three-story building at 120 West Jefferson Street, its home since 1914. Begun in 1889, the school held state charters to grant degrees in accounting, executive secretarial, business administration and finances. Like most IBC students, Thelma paid for room and board at a private home and walked to school.

"The other office girl and I spent lots of time together," Thelma remembered. "I spent my first few weekends in Fort Wayne with school mates. I enjoyed my chosen profession very much." On special weekends, Thelma took the interurban streetcar home to West LaFayette.

After a two-year course, Thelma graduated from IBC in February of 1930. Her timing couldn't have been worse. "The Depression was on. Everybody was firing instead of hiring," Thelma said. Her parents wanted her to work near LaFayette. The young woman searched, but her efforts turned up nothing.

By May, Thelma had resigned herself to a long stretch of unemployment. When her brother Carl's girl friend asked if she'd like to accompany her on a pleasure trip, Thelma agreed.

Then, as she packed, the phone rang. "The business college called and said they had one job opening beginning at 9 o'clock the next morning in Auburn," said Thelma. "Merl Bisel, who would be my boss, and the Rieke stenographer were IBC graduates. They called the school and asked for a secretary. I was the only secretarial person available."

Excited, Thelma asked her parents permission to take the job. After watching her efforts to work locally come to naught, they realized opportunities would be few and far between. Reluctantly, they let her go.

Thelma's next concern was meet-

When she first arrived in Auburn, Peg boarded at the home of the Noirot family. Their beautiful house survives at 207 S. Van Buren Street.

Peg posed for this photo in the Rieke offices about the time she joined the company.

ing the company's short time frame. "I was supposed to be at Rieke Metal Products Corporation by 5 o'clock that evening!" Thelma recalled. She postponed her travel plans and quickly packed. "Dad took me to LaFayette. I got on an interurban and at one stop had to change cars," said Thelma. Delays mounted as time slipped away. "Instead of walking into Rieke at 5 o'clock, I walked into the college at Fort Wayne at 5 o'clock," said Thelma. "That's all the further I could make."

The next morning, Thelma took an interurban to Auburn. The late reporting time didn't erase the company's need for her obvious skills. Bisel promptly hired her.

Since it was her first visit to Auburn, Thelma took a tour around town with her new boss. They looked at several boarding homes and Thelma chose a room in the mammoth Noirot house at 207 South Van Buren Street.

The next day, she reported for duty. Grateful for the opportunity, Thelma threw herself into her work. She served as a stenographer (someone who takes shorthand notes) and bookkeeper. Her impact on the company was soon felt. Before long, TW would refer to Thelma as "the best damn secretary I ever had!"

As the summer of 1930 came to a close, though, Thelma still hadn't met the company's owner. TW returned from the family's California trip after the new office girl had

Merl Bisel, left, poses with Irvin, right, and Hilda Turner (who became Irvin's second wife) outside the Rieke building around 1930.

been on the job for two months.

It was then that Thelma got her first glimpse of TW's handsome, second-oldest son. Just returned from the adventurous trip and full of stories, Glenn undoubtedly was a focus of interest and admiration in the company offices.

But, if any formal introductions took place, the two principal characters don't remember them. The brief moments they stood within talking range would be few.

Almost immediately, Glenn packed his bags and headed to Purdue.

GETTING AN EDUCATION

Chapter Ten

Between the years 1930-1934, Glenn built the foundation for his exciting adult years. During that short time period he received an amazingly diverse education—formal, personal and practical.

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The learning began at Purdue University. "I hitchhiked down in the fall of 1930 with another kid from Auburn, Art Hipskind," said Glenn. "We decided we would stay together in a boarding house or dorm. I had no thoughts of joining a fraternity!"

The two young men arrived on the day the college intended all incoming students should enroll. To pursue his goal of building bridges, Glenn sought to enter the school of civil engineering. Art wanted admission into the school of mechanical engineering.

Their different courses of study and the confusion inherent in a crowd of new students separated the two friends. "He got mixed in with a group of boys going to his school and I got mixed up with a group of fellas in my group," said Glenn.

The Civil Engineering students told Glenn they belonged to Sigma Nu fraternity. "Why don't you stay with us?" they asked. "So that's how I got into Sigma Nu Fraternity, Beta Zeta Chapter," Glenn said.

Glenn wouldn't see Art Hipskind

A mustachioed Glenn, left, strikes a light-hearted pose with fraternity brothers in front of Purdue's Sigma Nu. The cigars serve as a reminder that during his college days Glenn picked up the habit of smoking a pipe.

again for three months. Only during a vacation home did he learn that his friend had joined Alpha Chi. "I found out from his mother in Auburn what his address was," Glenn said.

Fraternities in 1930 could not be compared to their modern manifestations. Just beginning its long tumble into economic depression, America was a sober country literally and spiritually. Prohibition wouldn't be repealed for another three years, so it was illegal to drink alcohol. Spiritually, Americans turned their backs on 1920s-style excess and celebration of wealth. During the 1930s, simple values and frugal tastes became fashionable. In other words, the excessive parties commonly connected with fraternities today would not have been cool.

Of course, like all generations, young men 70 years ago gained introductions to extreme behavior through groups of their peers. They pulled pranks and got in situations which years later would be remembered fondly as frivolous. But at Purdue University's Sigma Nu in the early 1930s, Glenn found his fraternity brothers pushing him in studies, not in recreation.

On a personal level, Glenn felt fortunate to be in college at all. Not until after World War II and the GI bill would America think of post-secondary education as a virtual birthright for all citizens. Before the war, college remained the domain of children of the upper class, white collar set. As the first person in his blue-collar family to seek higher education, Glenn felt added responsibility to take his classes seriously.

He did, however, pick up one "vice" during his Purdue days: Glenn began to smoke a pipe.

* * *

At Purdue Glenn blossomed as a student. His intense interest in bridge design and mathematics drove him deep into his studies. His mature outlook on life prompted him to accept positions of leadership. The combination produced a body of work Purdue professors remembered for years.

Glenn relished the way in which his academic excellence became known to his younger brother. "Mahlon went to Purdue two years after I graduated," said Glenn. "He took Applied Mechanics from the same teacher I had. This professor was a very agile fellow. He would explain forces by grabbing a pipe in the wall with his two hands and pulling his body up straight so it was parallel with the floor!" Mahlon attended his first day in the wiry teacher's class with about 20 other students. "The professor asked each one their name," said Glenn. "When it was his turn, my brother said, 'Mahlon Rieke.'" The teacher looked up and said, "Would you stand, please?" Mahlon stood. The professor said, "I want the rest of you fellas to take a good look at this guy. I taught his brother a few years ago and he was the best student I've ever had in my class!"

Glenn laughed. "You can imagine what that done to my brother!" Mahlon only had two words for Glenn when the brothers again met:

"Damn you!"

* * *

Glenn's education continued outside the classroom.

He wanted to keep his body in fighting trim. As in high school, he didn't play a role on the school's sports teams, so instead took part in intramural competitions.

The desire to stay fit went beyond simple health. From the time of the 1916 National Defense Act, colleges often required male students to participate in basic military drills. The act created an organization to take charge of the program and named it "Reserve Officers' Training Corps."

Glenn took part in ROTC marches and exercises while at Purdue. Through this training, Glenn discovered his commanding sergeant also led Purdue's informal boxing club. The young military man invited Glenn to learn the art of boxing.

With that, Glenn climbed into the ring. "I boxed every evening after school, about 4 or 5 o'clock. I usually come into the fraternity house about the time they were eating dinner at long tables," said Glenn. His Sigma Nu brothers poked fun at the boxing novice. "There was always wagering among my fraternity brothers on how many black eyes I'd have when I come to supper!" Glenn said with a laugh. As his skin toughened under the pounding and his skills improved, the black eyes disappeared. Respect replaced the taunts.

The Purdue boxing club participated in tournaments organized by the Golden Gloves organization. Begun by American newspapers in 1928, Golden Gloves tournaments allowed amateur boxers to fight their way through local events all the way to a national ring. GG events represented one of several ways for a talented fighter to be chosen for the U.S. Olympic team.

Glenn didn't mislead himself about his fighting prowess. "I never was too good at the sport," he said. "I boxed in clubs in town. Most of my opponents were Negroes from the LaFayette area. I won a few fights in the lower echelons."

To Glenn, boxing represented a way to make the body strong and to toughen the soul. In that spirit, he often sparred with his roommate. "He was a big guy, weighed about 215 pounds," said Glenn. "He was in the heavyweight class and I was a welterweight." Glenn earned his roommate's respect and loyalty. "When we'd fight other boxers in competition, he'd be in my corner and I'd be in his," Glenn remembered.

Almost seventy years after the sparring ended, Glenn's nose still bore evidence of his pugilistic aerobics. "That nose took quite a beating!" he said, chuckling at its odd angles.

As in many of his endeavors, boxing developed Glenn's leadership skills. After his first year with the club, the ROTC sergeant graduated. "They didn't have anybody to take his place so they asked me to do it," said Glenn. "I was boxing instructor for about two years."

* * *

Toughness forged in the ring would come in handy. When his freshman year ended, Glenn stepped into a broad-scale arena which would test his leadership.

During the summer of 1931, Glenn took part in Purdue's Civil Engineering camp. "When we arrived at the camp, they gave all 123 boys a test on what we studied our freshman year," Glenn explained. "They said the one who made the best grade in this test would be boss of building an outdoor, Olympic-sized swimming pool. The leader would assign work to the rest of the boys."

From among all the serious students, one rose to the top. Glenn correctly answered 99 of 100 questions! The near-perfect performance won for him the job of crew boss. The distinction, though, proved dubious. "I was the most disliked guy in camp that summer!" Glenn said and laughed.

Lacking motorized equipment, Glenn faced the tremendous task of building a pool with a scoop shovel, fresno, team of horses and 120 student workers.

The job would stretch his capabilities of command nearly to their breaking point. "It was hot as blazes," said Glenn. "We built all the forms for the walls ourselves. We had a hand-turned concrete mixer which mixed only 1/3 yard of concrete at a time. It had to be run constantly all day in the hot sun. All the concrete was transported by wheelbarrows along planks."

Glenn not only instructed his fellow students what to do, he found it necessary to motivate them. He chose as his leadership model the Purdue professor who held overall responsibility of the camp. "He was a tough old son-of-a-gun!" said Glenn. "The first day he called us together and said, 'I want to tell you what a civil engineer is: he's a guy who can chew Piper Hisec and spit against the wind!'" (Piper Hisec was a popular brand of chewing tobacco.)

Glenn barked orders like his no-nonsense professor. From doing so, he learned an important lesson about dictatorial leadership. "By the end of the 30 days it took to build the pool, quite a few of the students wouldn't even talk to me," he said. He decided to make adjustments in his style of leadership.

Glenn was responsible for leading Purdue's Civil Engineering camp in the summer of 1931.

Aside from several tough lessons, the experience of building the pool left Glenn with a deep feeling of accomplishment. Twenty years later, he revisited the pool and proudly noted it still handled heavy use. In the concrete at

Despite Glenn's tough leadership and the fact that they had to dig and set concrete for a swimming pool with hand tools, participants in Purdue's 1931 Civil Engineering Camp found time for fun.

the bottom of the pool, Glenn could make out the initials of he and his classmates, along with their graduating class year—1934.

* * *

Glenn's college education almost came to a quick halt in its first year.

On February 18, 1931, he received a call from his father. TW had thrown a cigarette in a wastepaper basket at RMPC. About 5:30 p.m., the trash caught fire and flames licked up the cement block walls to reach the wood-framed roof. The resulting blaze virtually destroyed the Auburn building and its inventory. Investigators valued the loss at $20,000.

The disaster hit the family hard. Glenn knew his father already struggled to pay his Purdue tuition. TW would need help in rebuilding the business, so Glenn asked if he should catch the next train home. "No, you stick it out," TW replied.

With pluck and perseverance, the company hardly missed a beat. The fire had removed the roof completely and with it line shafts and belts which drove the machinery. Luckily, the majority of the machinery itself remained intact. In the 1987 interview, Irvin recalled: "The next morning, we put up stringers and lines. We were back in production the following day. Anyone else would wait until the roof was back on, but not Dad. I don't think we lost 12 hours!"

The company hired Auburn contractor Rollie Muhn to rebuild the roof. As Muhn's construction crew worked, RMPC continued to churn out flange sets under the gray, late-winter sky.

* * *

Although Muhn and his crew had the building good as new in record time, the fire pointed out an obvious truth: RMPC had outgrown its original Auburn facilities.

About the time of the fire, TW and Irvin noticed the big, empty building at 500 West Seventh Street. The four-story giant began its life back in Auburn's horse-and-buggy days. Auburn Wagon & Buggy Works appears to have constructed the building, perhaps prior to the turn of the century. In any case, by May of 1902, the company had stumbled and was taken over by a group of Auburn businessmen who incorporated under the name Modern Buggy Company.

If its founders had looked only a short distance ahead, the Modern Buggy Company would have foreseen the end of the horse-drawn carriage market. By 1902, horseless carriages had begun to appear on Auburn streets. Automobiles' complete dominance over horse-drawn vehicles waited just around the corner. The Modern Buggy Company didn't recognize the signs and—as a result—ended in receivership within two years.

On October 4, 1904, a buggy-building business with its eye on the future—the W. B. Kiblinger Company—bought the old Modern Buggy Company building. For $25,000, Kiblinger received ownership of the structure and $13,000 worth of carriage parts.

The new owner took the big building on a wild ride. Although William Kiblinger's company remained mainly a horse-drawn carriage maker, the owner understood that the future belonged to the horseless variety. In 1906, Kiblinger introduced his first automobile.

The company concentrated on making "high wheelers." These simple machines didn't offer much style or comfort, but they were inexpensive, could negotiate the muddy county roads and could easily be repaired.

Then, in November of 1913, McIntyre introduced its Imp Cycle Car. Basically a motorcycle on four wheels, the Imp took off in popularity. In 1914, inside the old Auburn Wagon & Buggy building, Kiblinger built 6,000 Imp Cycle Cars!

THE IMP CYCLE CAR CO.
"DON'T FORGET IT"

The current Rieke Corporation building boasts of a long history. It started as a buggy works. From 1913-1915, it was the center of a phenomenally successful fad featuring the Imp Cycle Car. After this peak of activity, the building trudged through some lean years before TW bought the building in 1931.

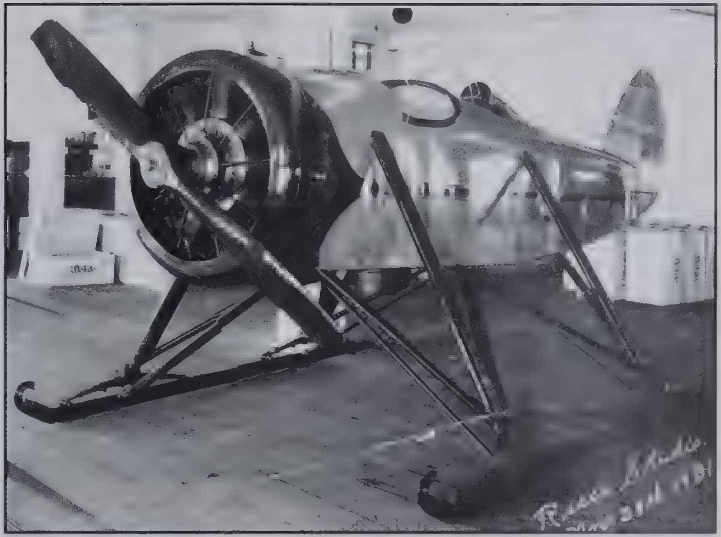
Competitors soon flooded the cycle car market and many companies found it hard to keep their noses above water. Although W. H. McIntyre Company had grown to fill five production facilities around Auburn and enjoyed the loftiest success of the town's many automakers, it's glory proved short-lived. By August of 1915, McIntyre was forced into bankruptcy.

The West Seventh Street building became a ghost of its past success. For 15 years—broken only for a short time when Ariel Manufacturing Company used its space to make porcelain-topped tables and kitchen chairs—the structure sat unused.

When the Riekes first noticed the old Auburn Wagon & Buggy building about 1930, they saw an answer to all future space problems. They could renovate the cavernous four floors as their needs grew. With their eyes focused on the road ahead, on June 5, 1931, RMPC traded their old plant and paid an additional $17,000 to take ownership of the historic building.

* * *

During this time, friendship between Irvin and Bill Fitzsimmons



This earliest version of the ice boat sat high off the ground and relied on a relatively simple design. Note the springs which softened the ride at the runners. This photo was taken in an upstairs room of the Rieke factory by Rice's Studio on Nov. 28, 1931.

grew. The two men's mutual love of airplanes, speed, explosives and practical jokes led them into all kinds of adventures.

In 1930, Ed Rieke retired from RMPC. That left the Rieke presidency vacant, so TW and the corporation board named Irvin to that vital position. He would hold the post the next 17 years.

As part of his duties, Irvin directed Rieke's sales. This job involved traveling to meet with far-flung customers. Soon after his presidential appointment, Irvin hired Big Bill as (among other things) the company's pilot. Consequently, RMPC became one of the first companies in the country to make regular use of an airplane for business travel.

Both Irvin and Bill thought creatively. When the two were challenged and put their heads together, they were bound to arrive at unique solutions.

In the winter of 1930—the same year in which Irvin took flying lessons—Wild Bill built an ice boat pulled by a motorcycle engine-driven propeller. He tested the contraption on Hamilton Lake, where TW had bought his family a cabin sometime in the late 1920s. Whether Irvin and his mechanical abilities helped this project isn't recorded, but about this time he built his own ice boat powered by a Cadillac car engine. From then on, Irvin and Bill cooperated and made ever more serious attempts to build speedy ice craft.

The two friends thought big. They set their sights on building an ice boat that could break the land speed record, which in 1931 stood around 300 miles per hour.

Irv and Bill failed to keep records of their efforts, which is a loss to history. Their triumphs and failures would have been interesting from several angles. Years later, Bill told Auburn historian John Martin Smith he remembered an ice boat powered by a LaRhone rotary aircraft engine which reached 180 miles per hour. On their next try, said Bill, they worked in secrecy to attach a souped-up Liberty 12 engine to their speed machine.

Surviving photos offer clues to the extent of the two men's efforts. A photo dated November 28, 1931, shows a vehicle that looks like an airplane without wings sitting on runners. Later the craft appears with "Miss Auburn" written on her side and "Built by Rieke" inscribed on her tail. A big number 1 suggests that this craft was Irv and Bill's first serious attempt at the speed record.

Other photos show an evolution to a second vehicle. In what looks like a rough, unfinished model, the speed boat body sits much lower to the ice. Since this would cause the propeller to hit the hard surface, a device has been added to raise the propeller drive above the front of the vehicle.

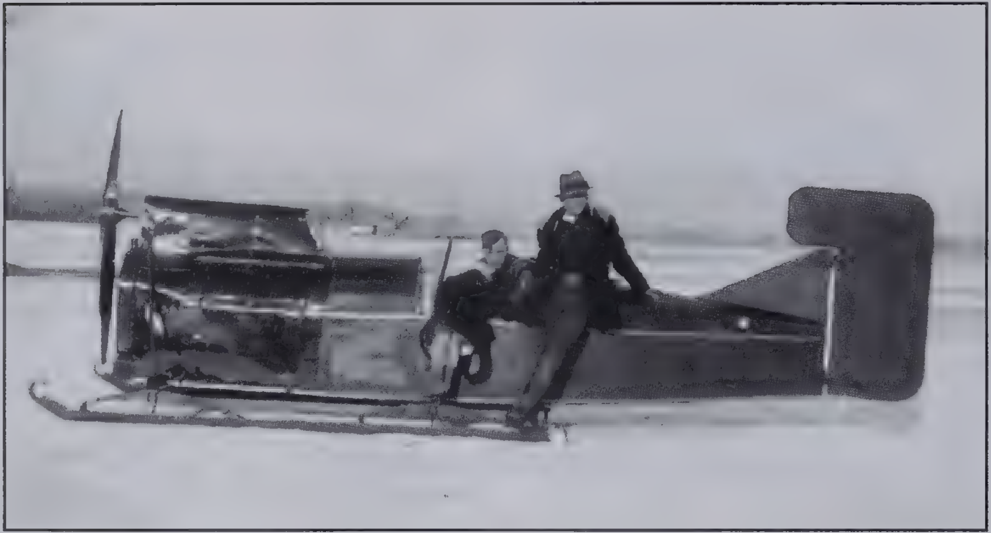
Succeeding photos show either modifications to the second vehicle or the creation of a third ice boat. In this version, the vehicle sits just inches off the ice. The raised propeller device has been further refined and enclosed to cut wind resistance.

The attempt at the land speed record became serious business. In 1932, Irvin and Big Bill set up an appointment with the American Automobile Association to serve as official timekeeper as the two men made a run for the record on Houghton Lake in Michigan. Irv and Bill also made arrangements with the local Chamber of Commerce to have a tractor scrape a 10-mile runway onto the lake ice.

With Bill at the controls, the ice plane hit 186 miles per hour within its first mile! Then, with the throttle open only halfway, the vehicle started to lift off the ground. Rough ice caused problems below; the runners spread and the propeller almost hit the hard surface. Running out of runway, Bill deployed hooks that had been hinged to the runners and designed so that, when the pilot pulled on a lever, the hooks dug into the icy surface. Shards of ice shot over 100 feet in the air and the craft came to a stop just 50 feet from the tree-lined shore.

Out of safety concerns, the team decided the Houghton Lake run would be their last attempt at the land speed record. The teamwork of Irvin and Bill, however, would continue.

* * *



Succeeding versions of the ice boat were lowered until it rode bare inches off the frozen lake surface. Note in one of the last versions, shown above, that the propeller had to be raised in order to keep it from digging into the ice. This photo was taken on Hamilton Lake, probably in 1933. Irvin sits at the control while his daughter, Dorothy, tries to climb in with him. Glenn stands at right.

Of course, Glenn couldn't watch his older brother have all the fun. During the summer of 1932, he took flying lessons from Big Bill.

Fitzsimmons was just beginning his acrobatic flying days. Through his new experiences, he came to firmly believe all pilots should be able to handle an airplane under severe circumstances. "He taught me to put a plane into spins, dives, outside loops, inside loops—everything you might have to do with an airplane!" remembered Glenn.

If those experiences didn't put Glenn's head in the clouds, events back on earth did. When his Purdue classes ended, Glenn returned to Auburn and went right to work as a draftsman in the RMPC offices. During that summer of 1932, Glenn and Thelma noticed each other. Neither one remembered exact details of their first meetings. "I had seen her in the office," said Glenn. "I don't know whether she hooked me or I hooked her!"

Somehow, though, a connection was made and the young couple started attending events together. "The first time I remember socializing with Glenn was going to the airport with Hilda and Irvin and watching him take off and land," said Thelma. Hilda Turner was a fellow office girl who had begun to accompany Irvin. The two couples double dated regularly at RMPC events, such as company picnics.

Equipped with a parachute, Glenn is ready to take his pilot's license test in this 1932 photo set at Angola's Tri-State Airport.

As Glenn's love life took off, his confidence in the air soared. Big Bill's training had the desired effect; Glenn grew to believe he could do almost anything in an airplane.

This capable attitude led to a misunderstanding when he took his pilot's test.

Paul Eyster began Tri-State Airport in Steuben County in 1930. As an early flier, Eyster broke the mold set by daredevils like Big Bill and Art Smith. Scrupulously careful, Eyster valued safety above all else. In other words, Glenn would have to impress a thoroughly conscientious instructor in order to receive a pilot's license.

There's one more bit of information needed to set the stage for the upcoming story: Paul Eyster stuttered.

Before entering the plane for the test, both Paul and Glenn donned parachutes. In keeping with the practice of the day, Eyster would be asking Glenn to perform spins and other acrobatics to prove he could control the plane.

"So we went up and went through all this rig-a-ma-roll," Glenn recalled. "We were flying around for probably half an hour, doing figure eights and right hand spins and left spins, and coming out in certain directions." Finally Eyster said, "Well, you know how to fly this airplane. Take us back home."

As the plane passed over Tri-State Airport, the two men could see a triangle of grass about three hundred feet long outlined by the runways. Eyster said to Glenn, "Do you suppose you could put your wheels down on that plot of grass?"

This is where Glenn's confidence in his abilities got him in trouble. In Eyster's simple request, he saw a great challenge. "I misunderstood him," Glenn explained. "He only wanted me to touch the wheels down in the grass, then roll on through to a stop. I thought he wanted me to land completely in the grass area—a maneuver that would require some tricky flying!"

Glenn welcomed the perceived challenge. "I'm coming down wind, and pass the grass to get my position right," he said. "Then I made a sharp turn while pressing on my right rudder, tilting the airplane into a slide. With the side of the airplane banked against the direction it's flying, it slows up quite a bit. When I was right above the diamond, I straighten up, touched the wheels down and rolled about 150 feet to a stop!"

Eyster was beside himself. "W-w-w-w-w-w-w-w-w-what the hell you trying to do? Kill us?" he stuttered. "W-w-w-w-w-w-what do you call that?"

Glenn replied. "That's a side slip."

After an exciting landing Paul Eyster, left, angrily asked Glenn, center, who had taught him to fly. The young pilot pointed over to Big Bill Fitzsimmons, right. This photo was either taken before Glenn's flight test took place, or long enough afterward that Eyster had recovered from his shock. Whatever the case may be, the smiling Angola instructor couldn't deny that daredevilish Fitzsimmons had taught his pupil well and granted Glenn a pilot's license.

"W-w-w-w-who taught you to do that?" Eyster demanded.

"Bill Fitzsimmons, my instructor," said Glenn. He pointed over to Fitz, who was standing a little ways away, watching the proceedings.

Despite trouble getting the words out, Eyster made his point clearly. "B-b-b-b-b-b-but Bill isn't flying with you now!" he said.

Although he angered his instructor in the process, Glenn had proven his mastery of the airplane. "I got my license anyway!" he said with a laugh.

The exciting summer didn't end there. Irvin that year bought a Stinson airplane for his RMPC travels. Before Glenn headed back to Purdue, the two brothers flew to the Cleveland Air Races. They invited Thelma and Hilda to join them. "We wanted to show off, I guess!" said Glenn.

Although they didn't realize it at

the time, the couples got a close-up look at an American legend. "Jimmy Doolittle won the race that year and set a speed record flying his GP Sportster," said Glenn. Doolittle would later make his lasting fame as leader of a daring bombing raid on Tokyo during World War II. Of little value militarily, the raid completely reversed the momentum of the war, cheering Americans and striking fear into the heart of Japan.

In the years preceding the war, Doolittle concentrated on stunt flying and air speed records. He was well-known in aviation circles, but not yet famous to the general public. In fact, at the Cleveland air shows, his airplane garnered more attention than he did. "His airplane looked like a bumble bee!" recalled Glenn. " It had short, stubby wings that stuck out about six feet on each side. Experts said it shouldn't be able to fly because it broke the rules of aerodynamics, but it had enough horsepower to make a barn door fly!"

Glenn laughed when he recalled his brief encounter with the man who would one day be the nation's darling. "Doolittle had a fence around his airplane to keep people from bothering him," Glenn explained. "He had the cowling off and was working on his engine with his sleeves rolled up and his arms covered with grease. I come up to the fence with my camera all ready and said, 'Hey, Jimmy, would you turn around!' He turned, but he had the damnedest grouchy look on his face you ever saw! He wasn't too happy."

When Rieke Metal Products Corporation bought this Stinson Reliant in 1932, it became the first northeast Indiana company to make regular use of an airplane for business purposes.

* * *

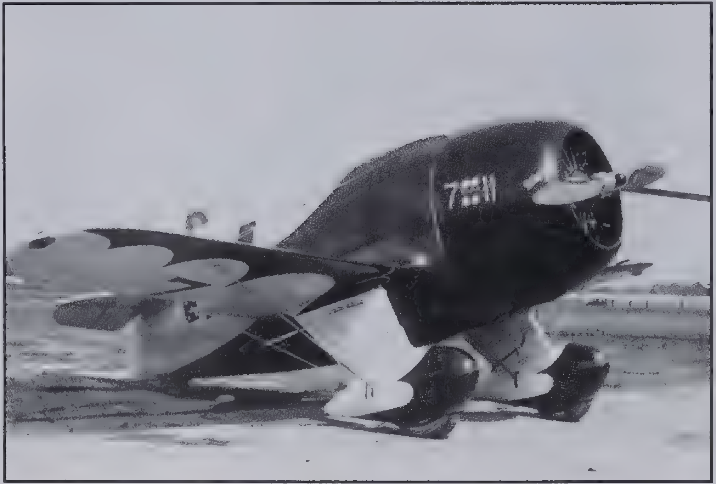
Glenn returned to Purdue in the fall of 1932, but that didn't bring his flying days to an end. To help with their flight training, Glenn and Irvin had purchased a non-motorized glider. Glenn decided to take the glider with him to school.

All he needed to fly was an excuse, an open field and a way to get the glider airborne. As he did in so many other situations, Glenn put his leadership skills to work. "Six other boys and I organized the Glider Club," he said.

"Dr. Elliot was the president of Purdue at that time. We asked him if we could fly on a field the school owned north of the agricultural buildings. He agreed."

That solved two of the three problems, but how were the students to get the glider up in the air? "We needed to tow it and get it airborne, but we didn't have a car," Glenn said.

Then his acquaintance with Art Hipskind and the Purdue mechanical engineering school paid off. "Each year the mechanical engineers' automotive design class built a body for an automobile chassis out of wire mesh and Plaster of Paris," Glenn explained. "Then they painted it and it would make a nice-looking car. We asked if we could use that chassis to tow our gliders. They said we could."



Jimmy Doolittle's "barn door" of an airplane, above, won the 1932 Cleveland Air Races. Glenn photographed the pilot, right, in a candid moment. Ten years later, during World War II, Doolittle would give American spirits a momentous lift when he led a daring bomb raid against Tokyo.

It may seem the Glider Club got the best of that deal, but the boys' rough treatment of the car served the mechanical engineers' purposes too. "Of course, running the chassis across that field at 60 miles an hour, hitting bumps and so forth, caused that plaster body to fly off," said Glenn. "By the time fall classes started again, their chassis was stripped down. No body on it at all! They could start designing all over again, so we was doing them a favor!"

Although his role is all but forgotten, Glenn played a part in Purdue history—the effects of which are still felt today. "The field we flew off is the present Purdue Airport," said Glenn. Over the decades that followed, he would remember the Purdue Glider Club whenever he landed at the airport he helped found.

* * *

While Glenn experienced success and achievement at Purdue, his father struggled to keep the family business above water.

The stock market crash of 1929 barely bothered the Riekes–they simply didn't have any money to lose. The economic depression that followed, however, pressed down on the small company.

Glenn led efforts to organize the Purdue Glider Club, pictured above in 1934. One of the mechanical engineering automotive design class's body-bare chassis–which the glider club used to get their birds airborne–can be seen at left.

Ironically, some of the pain was self-inflicted. Glenn remembered that the company kept about $2,500 in cash in an account with Auburn State Bank. After the US presidential election of 1932, Irvin, as RMPC president, predicted the new Democratic administration of Franklin Delano Roosevelt would take a more hands-on approach to America's economy, especially compared with conservative Republican Herbert Hoover. In playing the guessing game, Irvin figured that a small bank such as Auburn's would crumble under tough economic times and any added government interference. Fort Wayne's larger banks, he further reasoned, should be able to ride out the rough fiscal weather. As a result of his theory, Irvin transferred RMPC's money to a large Fort Wayne bank.

After the hard times fell, the Fort Wayne bank closed its doors. RMPC recovered only 10 cents for each dollar in their account. To the company's chagrin, the Auburn bank sailed though the rough waters intact.

The end result of Irvin's miscalculation was simple. "The company needed money!" remembered Glenn. A solution would not be so easy to find. Swallowing their pride, Irvin and TW went to both banks in town—City National and the Auburn State Bank—asking for a loan. The banks' response indicated the company's and the nation's economic outlook at the time. "I've got letters the banks wrote," said Glenn. "Both turned them down."

* * *

Lack of money didn't dampen the Riekes' daring spirits. In 1932, TW and Irvin collaborated on a highly speculative investment.

Through flying, Bill Fitzsimmons had become friends with Art Smith, Fort Wayne's famous "Bird Boy." In 1926, Smith died in a crash near Montpelier, Ohio, while flying an air mail route.

Fitzsimmons knew Smith had been working on a skywriting technique at the time of his death. Smith developed a system for keeping phosphorous stable in water until it could be shot out a tube behind an airplane in flight. When exposed to air, the phosphorous burst into flame, creating a thick, luminous smoke. The phosphorous, although dangerous, outshone exhaust oil, the common skywriting "ink" of the time. Smith obviously put value on the phosphorous equipment, for he had gone to the effort of patenting his ideas.

Fitzsimmons told TW of Smith's invention. With Irvin's help, Fitz was able to convince old "Easy Street" that Smith's technology might make a lucrative investment. According to Glenn, TW fashioned an agreement with Smith's mother and the late aviator's patents passed into Rieke hands. TW, Irvin and Bill then formed the Skywriting Corporation of America, with the intention of demonstrating and selling Smith's technology throughout America.

The infant company purchased a new Douglas bi-plane equipped with a 600 horsepower engine. After installing the skywriting equipment and chemicals—a total added weight of 3 1/2 tons—they decided to conduct a test run over Auburn.

Bill flew to 15,000 feet and turned on the equipment. When the phosphorous hit the air, it ignited in flames before turning to luminous smoke. Night had fallen and the combination of fire and billowing clouds glowed in the dark sky. Later reports said the display could be seen in Chicago.

The demonstration had a profound impact. Fitzsimmons later claimed Amish folk in Grabill stepped out of a tent revival meeting and saw the growing smoke. They interpreted it as a sign from God that the world was coming to an end!

Gliders reunite

In 1982, 50 years after the club began, the boy pilots of the Purdue Glider Club held a reunion.

"I think it was in March, we had a get-together and talked about the experiences we had," remembered Glenn. "We would wreck that glider and have to put it together so we could fly again!"

Six of the seven founding members–all of those still living–attended.

The Amish folks' less-literal neighbors, the ones who condoned the use of telephones, jammed area switchboards. They feared a deadly comet was approaching earth, or that an airplane had caught fire.

After its blazing introduction, the Skywriting Corporation of America latched onto several nice commercial jobs. Bill wrote "Coca-Cola" over Fort Wayne for the soda manufacturer and "Baby Ruth" for the Curtis Candy Company.

Success, however, would be short. The Rieke skywriting adventure's most famous job—and the one that sealed its doom—took place on August 14, 1933.

To advertise its attack on the economic depression, Franklin Delano Roosevelt's Department of Commerce hired Rieke to write NRA—the initials of Roosevelt's National Reconstruction Act—over the World's Fair, then being held in Chicago. At 20,000 feet altitude in the bright, clear sky over Lake Michigan, the letters could be seen for miles.

No one on the ground, though, was aware of a life-and-death drama that took place in the air while the display was being created. An oil line in the Douglas had broken. Just as he crested the high point in the letter A, Bill found himself pulling a "dead stick." The engine had quit!

Bill's stunt flying training served him well. He calmly completed his run, finishing the phosphorous leg of the last letter. Then he pointed the plane southeast to the Gary Airport, 10 miles away. Landing a plane without power is a delicate operation, but Bill pulled it off without a hitch.

His problems, though, weren't over. Glenn stood waiting to greet him as a member of the plane's ground crew. He recalled that as they worked to repair the plane's oil leak, the crew discovered a second leak—in the tube holding the phosphorous! As the flammable chemical fell on the hangar floor, it burst into flames.

Bill didn't want to stick around for Gary Airport's reaction to the pilot and plane responsible for globs of burning, glowing goo inside their building. Certain that officials would ground the plane if he stuck around, Bill jumped in and headed for the runway. By the time the leak had been discovered by airport workers, Bill was in the air, on his way to Auburn.

The Rieke skywriting days, however, were nearly over. On the way back, the Douglas continued to drip flaming phosphorous. For weeks afterward, the company received complaints from angry farmers whose fields had caught fire. Afraid that fires would lead to a lawsuit, the Skywriting Corporation of America quietly folded.

For the company's last mission, Bill flew high over Fort Wayne. As a tribute to his late friend, in big white letters he wrote, A-R-T.

Glenn, top row right, looks ready for an promising future in this 1934 photo, taken at the Sigma Nu fraternity.

* * *

Glenn graduated from Purdue in the spring of 1934. He held a civil engineering degree, had his body in fighting trim, and had proven himself as a leader. He was ready to take on the world!

The world, however, wasn't up for a scuffle. "When I graduated, it was during the Depression," Glenn recalled. "Nobody was building any bridges." Jobs in general across the country were scarce as hens' teeth. In Auburn, the town's shining economic light—Auburn Automobile Company—was desperately trying to stem its red ink flow. Putting an incredible strain on its human and financial resources, the company brought out two new body lines in one year. When the results of this expensive gamble were realized, the most optimistic souls hung their heads.

RMPC stubbornly plugged ahead. Wages only stood at 35 cents an hour. The work week had been cut to 30 hours. Still, there was work to be done.

So TW said to his second son, "Why don't you come work for me?"

FLYING HIGH

Chapter Eleven

The country may have been going through a Great Depression, but young Glenn T. Rieke certainly wasn't. He would pack an extraordinary amount of living into the seven months between his Purdue graduation and the end of 1934.

The events affected all aspects of his life, from adventure to business to love. The rush started as soon as Glenn unpacked his college bags.

* * *

"Brother Irvin wanted to go back to Montana and buy a ranch," explained Glenn. "He had a Ford Roadster with a rumble seat in the back. So, that summer, we took off!" The plan: simply drive from ranch to ranch, looking for Irvin's dream spread. For over a month the brothers drove across the big state. They covered 8,000 miles within Montana's boundaries.

In spite of all the landscape, the people of Montana impressed the Riekes most. "I'll never forget the trip," said Glenn. "You've heard of western hospitality? We found it! In the 35 days we were on the trip, we stayed in only one hotel!"

Ranchers greeted the young men—Glenn was right around his 24th birthday at the time, Irvin was 34—with open arms. Most of the warmth should be attributed to open-hearted friendliness, for Glenn said he noted a profound difference between Hoosier hospitality and the western variety. Still, he chuckled, he wondered if a certain amount of loneliness didn't contribute to the westerners' almost compulsive attention to guests.

Even ranchers who couldn't help the brothers find real estate insisted on treating the boys like family. Glenn relayed one typical example: "We went to a ranch in the mountains in back of Helena. An old man and his wife lived there alone. He insisted on taking us all over his ranch. He wasn't interested in selling, but he wanted to show us what he had. He was proud of it, and besides, they didn't get a lot of visitors."

The ranch tour provided the young men with some memorable entertainment. "The old man took us all around in his Model T Ford," explained Glenn. "When he wanted to go right, he'd turn the wheel and say, 'Geeee!' To go left, he said 'Hawww!' He drove his car just like he drove his horses!"

The Riekes spent all day on the ranch with the old man. By the end of their visit, they were cramped for time since relatives expected them in Helena 15 miles away for dinner. "We told the old man on our way to the ranch house that we were in a hurry," said Glenn. The old man replied, "You can't leave. My wife will have dinner ready for us!"

Irvin served as spokesman for he and Glenn. "We're awful sorry, but we just can't possibly stay. We have to get back," he said. Glenn remembered the old man shook his head and answered, "That's going to make my wife very unhappy!"

Glenn decided to smooth any ruffled feathers. When Irvin tried to go straight from the rancher's Model T to his own car, Glenn stopped him. He said to his brother, "Irvin, aren't we even going to go in and say good-bye to the lady?" Irvin answered, "You do it!"

Glenn should have foreseen an ambush. "Well, dumb me!" he said. "I went in. Here she had a great big roasted chicken on the center of the table. She had all kinds of goodies around it and a table set for four people!" Glenn explained the situation as best he could, but found himself overmatched. "She was a spit-fire of a woman," he said. "She didn't appreciate it at all when I told her we couldn't stay for supper. Even the old man was afraid to go back in his own house!"

Glenn wasn't too happy when he came out to the car. "Brother Irvin," he said. "The next time you're going in and making your own excuses!" As he finished the story, Glenn chuckled and shook his head. "I always felt bad that we had to leave that day!"

On occasions they didn't have a prior appointment, Glenn and Irvin took ranchers up on invitations to dinner. Following the meal, the brothers could count on an offer of free lodging. "There was nothing to do but stay over night with them!" said Glenn. This arrangement continued throughout the boys' travels.

* * *

Aside from food and lodging, Irvin and Glenn kept focused on their mission: to find the perfect ranch.

Their dedication paid off. About halfway between Helena and Great Falls, Irvin found what he was looking for. "The one night we stayed in a hotel, the town banker told us if we wanted to get a line on property around there, we should talk to the sheriff," recalled Glenn. "So we called on him. He was in bed, but said, 'Come on over.'"

The Riekes hustled to the lawman's house. When ushered into his presence, they discovered the interview would be strictly casual. "He was in his shorts and sittin' on the bed!" remembered Glenn. Despite the informal setting, the man's words wouldn't have been more thrilling to Irvin if they had been engraved in gold. "I know just the place you're looking for," the sheriff said. "If I had money, I'd buy it myself!"

The next morning, the sheriff took the brothers to the little town of Wolf Creek in Wolf Creek Canyon. About a quarter mile out of town, right on the main highway, he turned onto a lane going to the right. They drove another two miles to a bluff and were suddenly looking down on Holder Dam as it pushed back the Missouri River to form a long lake.

"This ranch laid along one side of the lake for 18 miles, then went up into beautiful mountains in back," said Glenn. "There was 17,000 acres of deeded land and 10 square miles of mountainous land owned by the government."

The appealing property even boasted a brush with celebrity. "Gary Cooper's father had a ranch on the Missouri River about five miles away, but Gary spent a lot of his boyhood on the ranch," explained Glenn.

Irvin fell in love with the ranch. Looking into details of the sale, he learned the previous ranch owner had defaulted on his federal taxes and a bank held the mortgage. Over the year that followed his and Glenn's visit, Irvin jumped through a tangle of legal ropes required to transfer ownership. In addition to buying the ranch, Irvin arranged to lease government land in the nearby mountains for $1 per square mile per year. When all the t's had been crossed, he named his new spread "The Ox Bow Ranch." It would be his main home for much of the next 35 years.

It's easy to see why Irvin fell in love with the ranch he called "Ox Bow." For an outdoorsman, the property had it all: water, woods, prairie and mountains.

With their mission complete, the brothers pointed the car east. After stopping a couple of days in Livingston to visit relatives, they started the long journey home.

It wouldn't, however, be a simple trip. "We hadn't gone very far until we saw a house along the road. In the yard was a little black bear with a collar on and a chain leash," said Glenn. The Rieke boys couldn't pass that by, so they stopped for a look. Then, on a whim, Glenn asked a woman standing nearby in the yard, "Do you want to sell that bear?" She nodded. So, for $25, the brothers gained a passenger.

"I brought the little bear over to the car on his leash. He jumped up into the rumble seat, stood there and looked out," remembered Glenn. "We tied him in so he couldn't jump out and got back on the road!"

Even in Montana, leading a bear by a leash wasn't a common sight. The boys soon learned their little friend would complicate their travels. "The first night, we pulled into a town and walked into a hotel," said Glenn. "I was leading the bear between us. He'd follow along like a little puppy dog. The old fellow behind the counter looked and said, 'What have you got there?'"

As if it wasn't obvious, Glenn answered, "A bear!"

"You can't bring him in here," snorted the clerk.

Glenn wasn't about to tolerate discrimination against his bruin brother. "If we can't bring a bear in here," he declared, "you can't have us either!" The three fast friends turned and walked out.

Had Glenn foreseen the trouble his proud response would cause, perhaps he wouldn't have been so adamant. But, once he had tied his and Irvin's receptivity to the bear's, there was no backing down. At each hotel along the way, Glenn stubbornly insisted that they all receive service, or no one would stay. Hotel clerks simply waved them on.

The outlook did not seem bright. Outside of Montana, the Riekes would run out of western hospitality. The brothers either had to back down from their proud stance, or keep driving. There seemed just one thing to do.

At first, Teddy was a fun and friendly pet.

"We decided to take turns driving and we drove right straight through from Montana to Auburn," said Glenn, matter-of-factly.

Despite their express intentions, the brothers still stopped for food. They did so one day in Aurora, Illinois, just about lunch time. "On the main street in town we passed a restaurant, so we pulled in front of a big bay window and parked," Glenn recalled. "We left the bear in the rumble seat and got a table right by the window so we could watch him. He was a curiosity and we didn't want somebody to get close and get bit by him."

The boys didn't realize they had a front seat to a show as they looked out that window. "We're sittin' there when all at once here comes a parade down the street—a couple hundred school kids being led by a van!" said Glenn. "The van went by, but the school kids looked over, saw our little bear and pretty soon we had 100 kids around the car. We had to leave our meal and go protect him!"

Once back on the road, Glenn and Irvin made good progress. They pulled into Auburn 35 hours after their journey began.

The routine of the Rieke family home was about to be disturbed. "It was about 1 o'clock in the afternoon," said Glenn. "Our father always come home for lunch from the office, about a two-block walk. He'd have lunch, then lay down for an hour or hour and a half to take a nap before going back to work. When we got home, Dad was sound asleep on the davenport. We come in the back door. I had the bear with me and when we got inside, I unfastened the clip and let him run."

The bear rumbled around the Van Buren Street house, investigating the new surroundings. Then he came to the living room. "When he sees Dad laying there, he jumps up right up on top of him!" said Glenn. "Dad wakes up with a little bear in his face!"

Used to his sons' pranks over the years, TW was non-plussed. His only reaction at seeing a baby bruin camping on his belly was to say, "Those damn kids are home!" Glenn chuckled at the memory. "Irvin and I gave Dad a lot of gray hairs!" he said.

The bear—named Teddy in TW's honor—became the unofficial mascot of RMPC. He would make his home at the factory the next couple of years. "The first floor of the shipping room sat off the ground," Glenn explained. "There were pillars and trusses underneath and about a three feet space between the ground and the bottom of the floor." He and Irvin bored a hole through the foundation and built an in-door cage for Teddy underneath the floor. Then they built an outdoor exercise area. "We put about a 10-by-10 foot square chain link fence around the hole in the foundation so that he could come outside," Glenn explained. "We had an old tire hanging there for him to swing on."

The little bear's fame quickly spread. "He was quite an attraction for everybody that come by the plant," Glenn recalled. Everyone who met Teddy seemed to want a hand in his upbringing and the little bruin's care and feeding turned into a community project. "When the candy man come and put candy in the machines in the plant cafeteria, he'd bring stale candy bars and feed them to the bear," said Glenn. "The milk man would bring milk to give the bear. The bread man, why, he'd throw loaves of bread to him. So the bear lived on bread, milk and candy bars. He just got to be rolling fat!" In two years, Teddy tipped the scales at 300 pounds.

Yet despite the kind human attention he'd received since just a cub, Teddy remained a wild, unpredictable animal. Eventually, his occasional walk on a leash outside the cage turned into a tug-of-war. "My cousin, Leonard Rathert, was taking him for a walk in town one day," Glenn recalled. "When Leonard went to turn around and come back, the bear wanted to keep going. So Leonard give the chain a jerk. The bear wrapped him around the leg with his claws and scratched his leg. Leonard finally got him back to the cage, but that's the last time we let him out."

About the same time, RMPC workers began to hear clawing underneath the shipping room floor. Glenn chuckled at the memory. "I told Leonard, 'You'd better get under there and see what that cage looks like.' Leonard went down there and saw the bear had scratched a hole in the plank wall. You could see daylight through it! Leonard came back up and said, 'I don't want any part of that repair job!'" Something had to be done, however, and by shutting Teddy outside, workmen were able to crawl underneath the building to fix the problem.

The novelty and humor of owning a wild bear were quickly turning into inconvenient liabilities. Not long after the hole in the wall was discovered, TW stuck his finger in Teddy's cage as a greeting. The bear didn't return the affection. "As soon as Dad done that, the bear clamped down on both sides!" said Glenn. "Luckily, Dad's finger went between two teeth and just got skinned." But TW had had enough. "Boys," he said to his sons, "You're going to have to get rid of that bear."

Glenn didn't shed any tears over Teddy's termination. Despite their adventures together, he never considered the bear a pet—just a wild animal trying to live a domesticated life. Without regret, Glenn said, "There wasn't anything else for us to do but shoot him." The brief ceremony took place right in the factory cage.

That wasn't the end of Teddy, however. The Riekes scheduled a luncheon at a fancy steak house in New York City, near their East Coast office. "We invited about 15 customers. Then we flew the meat out in our airplane," said Glenn.

A few eyebrows raised when the main entree was served—black bear steak. But if domestic life didn't prepare Teddy for life in the wild, it did prepare him for the dinner platter.

"Why, it was real sweet meat," Glenn remembered. "Boy, he was good eatin'!"

* * *

DANGER
HANDS OFF

"Teddy" grew from a small cub into a 300-pound bear on treats tossed into his cage. Note the door behind him where he could enter the plant and get out of the weather.

Back in Auburn by late summer of 1934, Glenn worked into the routine at RMPC. His contributions, however, would be anything but ordinary.

"In order to thread the plugs and rings, Dad bought a couple old spark plug threading machines out of junk yards and fixed them up," Glenn remembered. "We built a lot of our own machinery."

Young Glenn learned first-hand TW's talent for resourcefulness. "One of my first jobs was to go over to the little town south of Warsaw on Highway 14, to the Grip Nut factory. They made hex nuts using threading machines," said Glenn. "They were putting in newer equipment and taking out their old, heavy equipment. So I bought six or seven of their old machines. We rebuilt them to handle two-inch pipe threads and geared them down."

The "new" machines each sported six spindles, which allowed an RMPC worker to tap half a dozen rings at a time. "When a spindle got full, he'd drop the whole thing and put it back in. Then he'd start tapping again," Glenn explained.

A little later, Glenn and Irvin traveled to Indianapolis to purchase a 1,000-ton "knuckle joint" press, which had been used to make medallions. RMPC would use the big machine to "cold form" (in other words, using overpowering force to bypass the heating process) rings out of strip steel.

Through these creative recycling efforts, efficiency in the RMPC plant multiplied. The machine modifications also provided Glenn with a very practical education."That was my first exposure to buying junk equipment and rebuilding it to suit our own purposes," said Glenn. He didn't realize it at the time, but he was being tutored in an aspect of business which would dominate his career: mechanizing and streamlining the manufacturing process.

* * *

Even when he wasn't adapting machinery, Glenn was putting his engineering education to work for the company. He discovered RMPC's most valuable commodity—TW's innovative ideas—recorded only on envelopes and scraps of paper. So Glenn got to work. With pencils, rulers and angles, he produced professional-quality blueprints of his father's inventions.

After his drafting days, Glenn learned the business from the shop up. "I took a two-year apprenticeship in the machine shop, building tools and dies," said Glenn. "From there, I started going to various other jobs throughout the plant."

Although he held the family's first college diploma, Glenn did not hide in an office. Following the examples of his father and Irvin, he worked shoulder-to-shoulder with the hired men. This practical approach paid dividends in several ways: it gave Glenn intimate knowledge of the business—knowledge he could never glean from a textbook—and the workers grew to respect him for his abilities rather than his last name.

Tough times helped form Glenn's emerging character. In 1934, while America trudged through the Great Depression, about 65 people worked at RMPC. With no money to waste, the company based pay on merit, not family ties. Glenn's paycheck was no exception. "At that time the top wage in the plant was 35 cents an hour for a 30 hour-work week (shortened to avoid having to lay anyone off)," he said. "My paycheck, after deductions, was just over $10 a week."

Through long hours of work, Glenn gained an inside look at his father's dream. To put his family on Easy Street, TW never reined in his efforts. As on the homestead, he paved the way with back-bending labor and endless hours. Work consumed him—literally.

"That was my father. He drove himself to the point that his body wouldn't take it any longer," said Glenn.

* * *

Of course, Glenn's increased role at the company also provided him with insight into Thelma "Peg" Layden.

When the summer of their first dates ended in 1932 and Glenn returned to school, the young people began to correspond by mail. Over the next two years of alternating togetherness and separation, their relationship slowly evolved.

By the summer of 1934, the couple had grown to be mutually-dependent on one another. When a social event took place, Glenn and Thelma simply knew with whom they would attend. While they didn't talk about the future, an understanding of how they intended to spend the years ahead bound them together.

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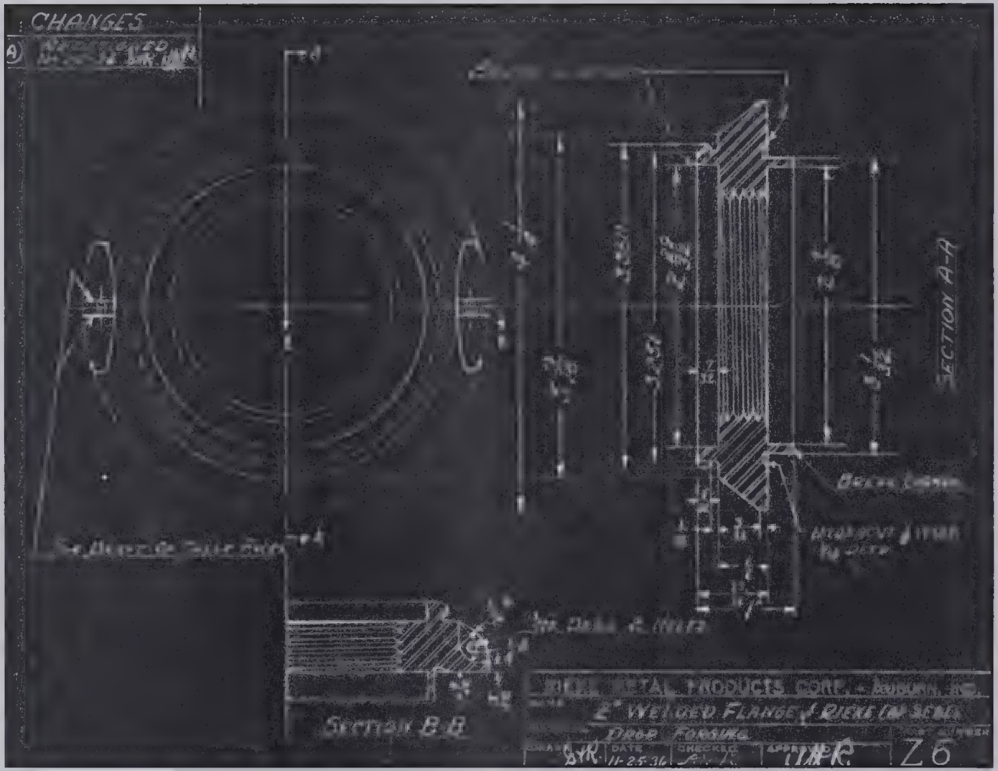
As Thelma's personal charms entranced Glenn, her office efficiency



Glenn spent much of his first two years with RMPC putting his father's inventive ideas into proper blueprint form. The above drawing details a 2-inch welded flange and is dated November 25, 1936.

impressed TW. Sometimes, though, TW's cantankerous personality clashed with Thelma's quiet competence. "I didn't take many letters from him, probably one a month," Thelma recalled. Despite working with her only occasionally on correspondence, TW held Thelma to an impeccable standard. "I took a letter in for him to sign and the pen wouldn't write," she remembered with a chuckle. TW bellowed, "Can't you keep ink in that pen!" and threw it clear across the room.

Thelma laughed. "When Ted had a temper, he had a temper!"

Still, it wouldn't be fair to paint TW as all work and no play. The times he lived in and his burning desire to succeed drove him to work hard, but he could have fun, too. Although the Depression would not let go entirely of the American economy until the country revved up production for war in the mid 1940s, after FDR's election, prospects began to brighten. The country caught the President's infectious high spirits and began to feel better. The terse, somber mood of hard times lifted. People began to enjoy themselves again.

As one result of this relaxation, Congress repealed the national prohibition of liquor production, sales and transportation. Just before 1933 ended, Indiana joined the majority of states which ratified the repeal.

Throughout Prohibition, TW made home-brewed beer in the basement of the family's Van Buren Street home. When the concoction came of age in its 10 gallon crocks, TW would enlist Irvin and Glenn to bottle the brew. "He had a capping machine to put beer caps on," remembered Glenn. "We had a regular production line going!"

To hold the bottled finished product, TW built shelves. Like the monotonous drinking song, after a batch reached maturity, 100 bottles of beer would line the Riekes' basement walls.

TW's sons found humor in their father's basement brewery. Occasionally, something would go awry in the brewing process. As a result, gas formed inside the bottles, creating tremendous pressure. When a cap could no longer contain the gas, something had to give. "Every once in a while, he'd get a bad batch," said Glenn with a chuckle. "Irvin and I slept in the same room and we'd be lying in bed at night when we'd hear *bing!*, way down in the basement. Bing! Bing! The caps were blowing off the bottles!"

Despite problems keeping his home brew contained, TW considered his beer the best of the brewer's art in Auburn. That contention also gave his boys a laugh. "When Prohibition ended," Glenn noted, "Dad was able to buy cases of regular beer and—for some reason or other—that home brew never tasted right after that!"

Glenn and Thelma hold hands during their dating days.

The last Prohibition-era batch of home brew was forgotten. "Maybe a year or so after the repeal, those shelves still held a lot of beer bottles," Glenn recalled. He and Irvin delighted in teasing their father that the home brew in the basement was poison.

They didn't know how right they may have been. "An old fellow who lived over on Ensley Avenue supplied Dad with manure worms," said Glenn, leaning into a story. "About 1929, Dad bought that cottage on Hamilton Lake. When he would get through working for the evening, he'd take a can of manure worms, go up to the lake, get the rowboat out and fish for bluegills."

The old man needed work so, in the summer of 1935, TW hired him to whitewash the Rieke's basement walls. That evening, when TW came home, the old fellow said, "Hey, Ted, is that home brew down in those bottles?" Glenn chuckled. "He knew damn well it was!"

Having seen the bottles covered with dust, the old man realized TW might be willing to let them go cheap, so he asked, "Can I make you a deal for them?" According to Glenn, his father replied, "You can have the whole damn bunch of it if you bring me a gallon can of manure worms!"

The next day, the old man arrived in his Flivver, presented TW with a can of worms, and loaded up the bottles of beer.

The story might have ended there, but for what happened next. "About a week later, we were setting in the living room—Dad, Mother, Irvin and I—and I was reading the evening paper," said Glenn. "Among the obituaries was this man's name. The paper said he died of a stomach disorder!"

Glenn turned to Irvin and, in a voice his parents could hear, said, "Brother, I knew damn well that stuff was poison!"

The years haven't taken away the contention. "To this day, I think that fellow over-indulged himself," said Glenn. "And the beer had set there a long time to ferment!"

* * *

Overindulgence in liquor adversely affected the Rieke family by happenstance during a fishing trip at their Hamilton Lake cottage.

"One evening, Dad, Mother and I were out fishing in our rowboat in about 30 feet of water between Shag Island and Pen Point," said Glenn. "There was another rowboat with two men fishing, anchored about 100 feet away. They were drinking quite heavily and singing."

After a while, Glenn detected a difference in the men's tone and looked over. "One guy in the bow of the boat was looking down, saying, 'Come on up, Jim! Come on up!'" Glenn recalled. The man's partner had fallen overboard!

TW focused on business

Through much of his life, TW Rieke remained focused on the business at hand–often to the exclusion of everything else.

Glenn recalled that, about 1937, Auburn got its first bowling alley. The alley asked local businesses to take part in tournaments, so RMPC formed a team.

One night, Glenn returned home carrying a bowling ball. "Where you been?" TW asked. "Bowling," Glenn answered. TW looked at his son and said, "You know you don't have time to bowl. You've got work to do!"

"That was him," said Glenn. "He was always working. The only thing he could think about was his factory, his job and trying to get ahead."

The Riekes pulled anchor and quickly paddled over. "The guy in the boat could hardly stand up, he was so drunk," remembered Glenn. "We anchored our boat to mark the spot, then got into his and went to shore to report the accident."

The story ended tragically. The next morning, county officials found the missing fisherman at the bottom of the lake, almost exactly at the spot marked by the Rieke's anchor.

Although he had been too late to help in that instance, on another occasion Glenn played a role in averting tragedy on Hamilton Lake.

"One night, Brother Irvin and I were in bed, but hadn't gone to sleep yet, when we heard yells for help," he explained. "We jumped up and went down to the lake."

The Rieke's in-board motorboat sported a big headlight on the bow. Glenn and Irvin shoved off from shore and turned on the light. "We could hear girls yelling," said Glenn. "They had been diving out of a boat and swimming when the wind blew their boat away. They tried to come in through the thick weeds, but couldn't make it. They had been out there quite a while and were pretty well water logged."

Glenn and Irvin rescued the girls and delivered them to shore. The quick response of the young men literally saved two lives. "If we hadn't come out, they'd have drowned!" said Glenn.

* * *

Away from the lake, the boys found diversion from work with Bill Fitzsimmons. "Bill didn't drink much, but he was always in for a party," explained Glenn. "He'd get everybody else having a high time."

Glenn's only experience in a Prohibition-era speakeasy came in the company of Wild Bill. "It was an old farmhouse on State Road 427, about two-thirds of the way to Fort Wayne," Glenn recalled. "Bill knew the guy who run the place."

Although he shared a few beers with Bill and Irvin, Glenn remembered the experience as anything but relaxing. "I never felt comfortable there," he said. His feelings proved well-founded: a couple of nights later, police raided the establishment.

Life on the edge attracted Fitzsimmons. Whether in an airplane, an ice boat or a social situation, he and danger traveled together. Irvin enjoyed going along for the ride.

"Bill and Irv would take big weather balloons, tie a stick of dynamite to them, light a long fuse, and turn them loose," Glenn remembered. "Those weather balloons would go up quite high then explode. They could really scare people!"

On at least one occasion, the balloons gave the jokers themselves a scare. "We were at the old airport west of town during the Free Fall Fair," said Glenn. "Bill and Irv got one of these big balloons and tied a couple of sticks of dynamites to it. They lit the fuses and let it go. The wind was blowing from the west and the balloon floated right over the fair crowd when the dynamite went off!"

The pranksters had watched the balloon's course helplessly, desperately hoping nothing would happen. "It was crazy!" said Glenn. "If something would have happened to that damn balloon and it come down, somebody would have got killed!"

Luckily, Bill didn't always employ explosives when he wanted to startle people. His humor, however, remained on the edge.

"We were visiting a cottage on Lake George when Bill wired a little radio speaker down inside the stool of the outhouse," Glenn said with a chuckle. "Then he waited until one of the women went in."

When the woman had settled into position, Bill's voice came up from under the seat. He said, "Lady, would you mind movin' over to the next hole? I'm working under here!"

Glenn leaned back, laughed and said, "She came flying out of there!"

* * *

As Glenn's life remained on the move, by coincidence—and under a whole different set of circumstances—so did the life of EL Cord.

Cord and his Auburn Automobile Company enjoyed virtually untainted success through 1933. Late in that year, the young industrialist reached the height of his power. He bought shipbuilding and cab companies to create a virtual transportation empire.

His swift descent started almost immediately afterward. For some mysterious reason, Cord moved his family out of the country that same year. Several theories why exist: perhaps his children had been threatened with kidnapping; perhaps his dealings in the cab companies angered men who operated on the other side of the law, perhaps the investigation of EL's stock dealings by Roosevelt's brand new Securities & Exchange Commission grew too warm. Whatever the reason, while he yachted around Europe, Cord's grip on his empire slipped. He would never again gain firm control.

By 1934, Cord spent almost no time in Auburn. Soon after his first wife's death to cancer in late 1930, Cord moved out of his Main Street home. He returned to town only for occasional business meetings.

Early in Glenn's interest in aviation, he occasionally glimpsed EL at the airport near the Cords' home. "When I knew him, he was probably in his mid 40s," recalled Glenn. He described Cord as a "very energetic individual, on the eccentric side." One quirk Glenn clearly remembered. "Cord's shirt had to be clean. If he got it a little sweaty, he had to go home. I've seen him change shirts two and three times a day!"

The two men's casual conversation brought young Glenn into an aviation-based relationship with Cord. He spoke to the Auburn Automobile leader, but their conversations never went beyond small talk.

At the time, Cord had a national reputation—his face twice graced the cover of *TIME* magazine. Despite Cord's prominence, Glenn never felt intimidated. From his father, he learned to respect all men as equals. That meant pushing no one beneath you, nor holding anyone above you. Glenn said he applied the same philosophy to Cord. Besides, Glenn noted, it's the current generation that deified the auto manufacturer. Local contemporaries of the man rarely placed him on a pedestal. In fact, many regarded him with contempt after his stock manipulations became public.

Whether revered or reviled, Cord's presence had faded at the airport by late 1934. Without his energetic interest, the grounds suffered. Almost as an off-handed gesture, administrators of Cord's empire sold the airport to Auburn Automobile Company. The struggling automaker in turn sought someone outside its walls to manage the field.

The opportunity fit RMPC perfectly. With a pilot in the presidency (Irvin), a full-time corporate pilot (Fitzsimmons), and a new Purdue-educated draftsman who also held a pilot's license (Glenn), no other northeast Indiana business could claim such an airborne pedigree. The company enthusiastically took over the airport's management. And, to his delight, the bulk of the responsibility landed on Glenn's shoulders.

Around this time, Irvin bought RMPC's first airplane (the Stinson Reliant mentioned earlier). In yet another historical tie-in, at that time E.L. Cord owned Stinson Aircraft Corporation, a small family-owned company just north of the border in Michigan. In fact, the Auburn Automobile Company administration building—today's ACD Museum—displayed a Stinson aircraft along with other products from Cord's empire. "I think that's the reason we bought the Stinson," said Glenn.

The small single-engine craft would play an important role in the Rieke brothers future adventures.

* * *

Many Rieke employees fondly remembered October 31, 1934, throughout their lives. TW declared that date a holiday. He paid for transportation and admission for the entire factory work force to attend the final day of the World's Fair, then being held in Chicago.

At 6:15 a.m., a special New York Central train pulled off of RMPC's side track and chugged north on the Fort Wayne-Jackson branch tracks to

Waterloo. From there, the train headed west.

RMPC employees and their spouses or guests—a total of 65 people—filled two cars. One, a passenger car, allowed workers to talk and play cards. The other, a baggage car, had been turned into a party room. While a banjo player plucked, Rieke workers danced.

Glenn and Thelma attended the festivities as a couple.

At Chicago, the RMPC gang disembarked and walked under an arch carrying the fair's title "Century of Progress." The displays inside offered glimpses of undreamed-of technology. EL Cord's transportation empire boasted side-by-side exhibits: one for his Century Airlines which aimed at making air travel as easy and inexpensive as travel by train, the other for his innovative automobiles.

If travel didn't tweak your interest, Sally Rand would. "She danced wearing only big feathers," remembered Glenn. "She was the biggest attraction for most of the boys!"

Even Rand, though, couldn't steal Glenn's heart the way one exhibit did. "There was a little simulated airplane you could sit in," he recalled. "The engine was up front with a big propeller. It had wings and a tail service and rode on a big horseshoe frame. Part of the fuselage sat on roller bearings, so if you wanted to turn the 'airplane,' you could. That whole fork would turn in any direction you wanted to go!"

The fair dubbed the flight-simulating device an "ornitator." Glenn and his cousin, Leonard Rathert, studied every aspect of its design and wondered aloud whether they could build their own ornitator.

After a long day, two car loads of very tired RMPC employees pulled out of Chicago at 10:30 p.m.. At 2:10 a.m. Thursday, the train pulled onto the Rieke side track.

According to Glenn, no one danced on the way home.

* * *

A life-affirming yet sad side story took place during this closing portion of the Chicago World's Fair. In Callander, Ontario, Canada, on May 28, 1934, Elzire Dionne gave birth to five identical girls—Cecile, Yvonne, Annette, Emilie, and Marie. They were known as the Dionne Quintuplets.

To celebrate the one-in-57 million birth, gifts poured in from around the world—as did offers to exploit the infants. The quint's father, a poor farmer named Oliva Dionne, signed a contract to show his new children (the couple already had six) at the World's Fair. Subsequently, the Ontario government ruled the Dionnes unfit to be parents and declared the children wards of the British King.

Ironically, after assuming custody, the Ontario government saw nothing wrong with exploiting the children. A virtual theme park named Quintland rose across the road from the Dionne farm. Quintland featured a hospital, playground and gift shop where visitors could buy quint-licensed products (thankfully, the money went into a trust fund; by 1938, through gifts, appearances in movies and licensing agreements, the quints had accumulated $600,000).

In a special viewing room at Quintland, tourists could watch the babies from behind a one-way mirror. To tell the identical siblings apart, the government dressed the girls in color-coded clothes. The quints lived in their little fantasy world for 10 years. Then, after a long court battle, they were returned to the custody of people they didn't recognize—their parents.

At the height of the Depression,

the quints drew three million visitors to their small community.

* * *

As the Chicago trip illustrated, business started to bloom at RMPC by late 1934. TW began to spend more and more time away from the office, leaving every-day decisions to Irvin. Easy Street hadn't yet been reached, but the neighborhood through which the Riekes trudged had definitely improved.

Late in 1934, TW and Mary decided to sample fine living for the first time. Although he justified the expense by claiming it was for business, TW took a trip whose destination sent a message: he and his wife were going to Spain!

In business terms, the trip was a bust. TW met with an elderly Spanish man who asked to be issued a license under which his company could produce RMPC closures. An agreement was hammered out, but Spanish politics intervened.

Rieke
METAL PRODUCTS CORPORATION
AUBURN - INDIANA - U.S.A.

RMPC workers gathered in front of their chartered train car on October 31, 1934, for a photo. Dressed in their finest, they were headed to an all-expenses-paid day at the World's Fair in Chicago. The arrow at right points to Glenn. Just in front of him stands Thelma (in a white v-neck).

From the time tradition-bound conservatives won an October, 1933, election, Spain had been in turmoil. In October of 1934, government troops led by Francisco Franco put down a worker rebellion. Through an election in February of 1936, democratic radicals won control of the government. The tension between traditional conservatives and the new republic broke into armed fighting. No one was safe.

The republican government didn't trust conservative Franco, so it stationed him in the Canary Islands. This out-of-the-action commission simply gave him time to perfect his plans of revolution. In July of 1936, army leaders made their move. Franco came to power and set up a Fascist government. Civil war followed. Worried nations of the world chose sides.

In the crush of earth-shaking events, the RMPC licensee agreement was forgotten. The Riekes, however, didn't forget their Spanish friend. When war took away all his material wealth. TW sent the old man food packages.

The acts of charity continued for more than a year.

While in Europe, TW set the stage for later expansion by the company into all corners of the world. He made contact with potential licensees in Germany, Belgium and England.

The trip also had a lasting effect on Mary. Her taste for world travel had been whetted.

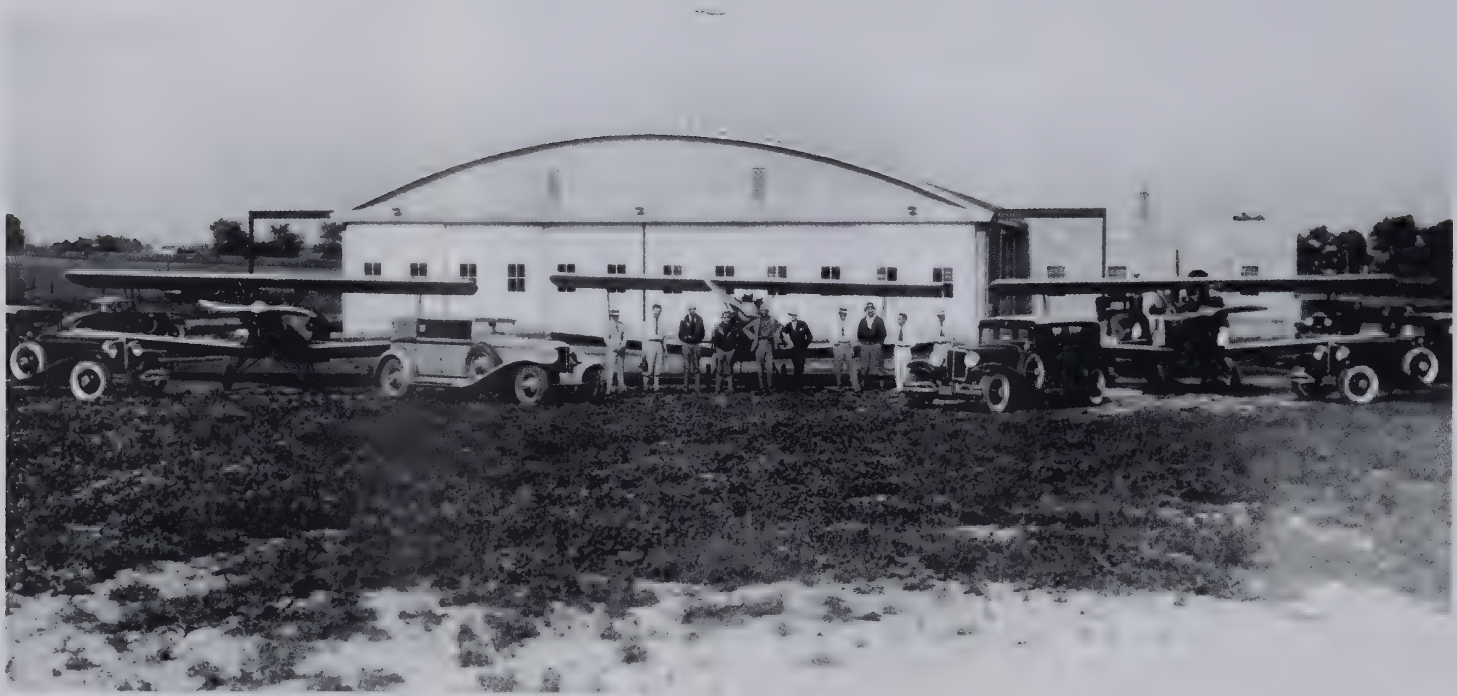
* * *

As frenetic 1934 came to a close, Glenn and Thelma formalized their commitment to each other.

There had been no discussion of marriage, no dreaming about the future, no shopping for an engagement ring ("We didn't have money to spend on frivolous things like that!" said Glenn).

There was no proposal on bended knee. In fact, there was no proposal at all. Yet both perfectly understood what it meant when, one evening at Christmas time, Glenn silently pinned his fraternity insignia on Thelma's sweater.

They set the date for June of 1935.



The Cord Airport as it appeared in 1930.

NOT SETTLING DOWN

Chapter Twelve

If anyone assumed engagement and marriage would induce Glenn T. Rieke to settle down, they were sadly mistaken. The year 1935 simply continued 1934's high energy pace.

* * *

Irvin couldn't get his Montana ranch out of his head. A circle of young men at the plant shared his enthusiasm, so plans for a trip evolved. A small group decided they would fly to the ranch in March of 1935.

"There were four of us in the airplane: Brother Irvin, I, my cousin Leonard Rathert and Bill Fitzsimmons," said Glenn. "We took Bill along since Irvin and I were neophyte pilots at that time and we thought we should have someone more capable than us along."

The trip wouldn't appeal to the faint-hearted. Air travel in 1934 was not the highly-regulated, carefully-monitored, safety conscious concern it is today. Pilots flew by "the seat of their pants"—in other words, intuition served the functions now fulfilled by instruments. The Rieke Stinson, in fact, featured only one instrument—a ball compass. Under those circumstances, to fly through largely uncharted airspace, over mountainous terrain at that, came close to being categorized as crazy.

In 1935, airports often were little more than unplowed fields. No tower radioed instructions when or where to land. In many cases, the terminal of the airport would be unattended.

Still, any airport would be a safe haven compared to most of the landing strips the Rieke group would be forced to use. Over much of the terrain they would cover, there simply would be no amenities for airplanes .Safe landings would depend on the group's ability to spot a level field from the air and the pilot's ability set the plane down on bumpy terrain.

The young men would learn just how far they had pushed fate.

"The trip out to Montana was uneventful," said Glenn, beginning the story. "We parked the airplane on a field at Livingston and borrowed an automobile to drive up to the ranch."

A few days later, the men returned to the plane for the flight home. With the first sight of the vehicle, their hearts fell. "We found the airplane sitting in about four inches of snow," recalled Glenn. "Someone had drained all the gas and broken the glass gauges that hung underneath each wing. The gauges allowed you to look out the windows of the plane to see how much gas you had in each tank."

Scrounging around, the men found two Rieke 3/4-inch barrel plugs. Through luck, the plugs fit the broken gauge holes. The plugs would hold the gas, but they would also would withhold information—such as how much gas the tanks contained. So the foursome took off without being able to tell in flight exactly how much fuel separated them from a crash.

Undaunted, they pushed ahead. "We filled the tanks with automobile gasoline, which was all that was available at that time, and took off," said Glenn. Irvin sat in the pilot's seat and pointed the plane toward Pierre, South Dakota, where the group knew an airport awaited. They arrived in Pierre safely only to find conditions wouldn't let them land. "The weather was real bad," said Glenn. "The field looked like it had 2 1/2 or three feet of snow on it. We flew down low and could see the tops of fence posts sticking only a foot out of the snow, so we kept on going."

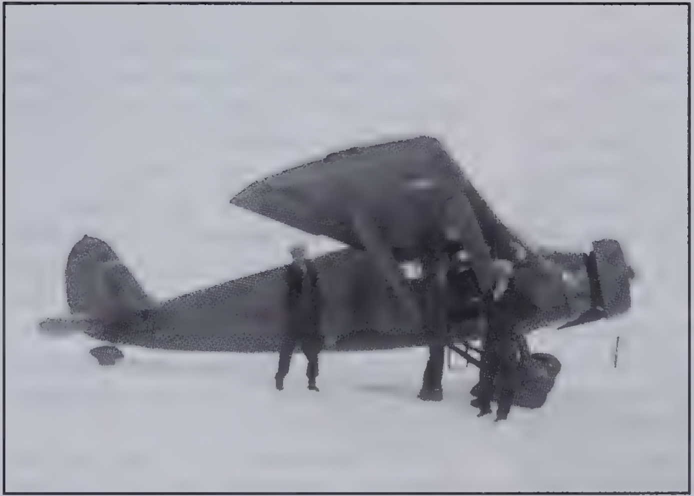
As the men flew into the unknown, the cloud ceiling dropped. Visibility followed suit. Then snow began to fall. Well trained in Bill's aviation tricks, Irvin flew a steady course. "As long as we stayed right above the railroad track, we knew which direction we were going," said Glenn.

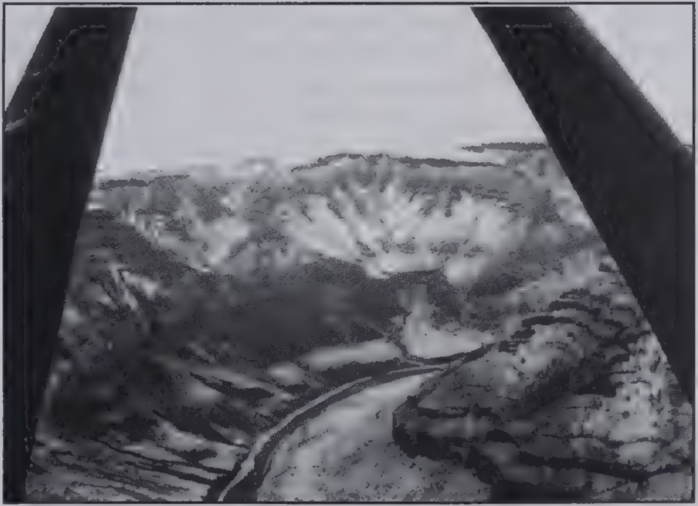
Despite its bluster, the weather soon moved down the young men's list of concerns. Without gas gauges, they had to estimate how much fuel remained by flying time. For example, the driver of a car which gets 240 miles to a tank of gas and is traveling 60 miles per hour knows the car will run about four hours before using all the fuel. Using similar calculations, the men set a time limit on their flying. After they passed their scheduled stop in Pierre, tension grew. "We kept a close watch on our watches," said Glenn.

With no airports in-between, Irvin decided to try for their second scheduled stop in Mitchell, South Dakota. Everything, though, would have to fall in place for them to make it.

The weather did not cooperate. To keep on track, Irvin flew less than 100 feet over the railroad line. Their minimal altitude also posed a threat. "We'd come to a little town that almost always had a grain elevator," recalled Glenn. "We'd have to climb over top of that elevator or circle around the side to get back on track."

The snow blew harder against the plane's windshield. Time ticked by and





The Stinson Reliant's engine is running in the snowy top photo, as (from left) Bill Fitzsimmons, Glenn and Leonard Rathert prepare to board. A face–probably Irvin's–appears in the plane window. The photo below shows the tough terrain over which the adventuresome foursome flew.

still no sight of Mitchell. "Our watch told us we would never make it. Our gas just wasn't going to hold up!" Glenn said. "So we kept on going as far as we could." Visibility fell to the point that the low fuel supply sometimes was forgotten for a few anxious moments. "We did not want to lose sight of the railroad track!" said Glenn.

As the weather howled, Irvin voiced concern that the wind might force them to the ground. All four men began looking for favorable fields which might accommodate an emergency landing.

The plane reached Plankington, South Dakota. After avoiding the town's grain elevators, the four friends barely flew past the outskirts of town when the lights went out. "We ran into a solid wall of snow," said Glenn. "Visibility was zero-zero!"

Irvin circled back. He found the railroad tracks again and came into town. "We knew a field we wanted to go to, about a quarter mile west of Plankington, next to the railroad track," said Glenn. "It looked like it would be all right for a forced landing."

Irvin came in low and slow. The men dared hope they could escape unscathed from their predicament.

Then the wheels touched the ground.

"We found the field wasn't frozen underneath," said Glenn. The plane's wheels sunk into the soft mud. "We didn't roll more than 100 feet when the plane come to a stop and started to nose up overhead," said Glenn. "The tail come up, the nose went down and we come to a critical angle." After a scary moment, the airplane settled back onto its wheels, right side up.

The four men trudged through mud to the railroad tracks. They hiked into town and found an old hotel at the main intersection. "We got a room for the night and asked the hotel man if we could get somebody to bring in a team of horses to help pull our airplane out of the mud," said Glenn. The hotel clerk suggested they visit the barber shop, for the barber was well acquainted with ranchers in the area.

The barber didn't sound too hopeful at first. In 1935, the vast Northwest had just survived another drought, he said. Around Plankington, crops failed. Livestock was scarce. However, the hair cutter continued, a rancher 10 miles south of town owned a pair of large Perchan horses. The barber agreed to drive to the man's house and ask him to help the Hoosiers.

While the barber went on his mission, the boys walked back to the hotel for supper. Not until 11 p.m. did the horse team arrive.

"All of us went out to the field and hooked the horses onto the airplane," remembered Glenn. The temperature had dropped. Ironically, the cold that failed to make the landing strip safe now turned the field into a virtual magnet. Frozen mud clung to the tires.

The Perchans proved up to the challenge. "We don't know whether or not the team was going to be able to get the plane out," said Glenn. "But they were big and, my god, they worked and worked! Those two horses darn near got down on their bellies to pull it out."

The team dragged the plane about 100 yards to the railroad. Then, by pushing the craft, the four young men rolled it onto the track bed, the wheels straddling the metal rails. Then the plane bumped its way over the wooden ties into town. Like any other guest would park their car, the young adventurers pushed the plane into a choice spot in front of the hotel.

"We were the sight of the town that night!" remembered Glenn. "At that time, very few people had seen an airplane, especially out in that country."

The next morning about four o'clock, the men loaded up to try to fly out of Plankington. "It was pitch dark outside," said Glenn. "It was very cold and took quite some time, but we got the airplane started."

They still needed gasoline. Noticing a gas station on the main east-west route known as Old Highway 9, the boys taxied through town. Glenn laughed at the recollection. "Lights came on. People didn't know what all that racket was," he said. "A lot of them had never heard an airplane!"

The boys parked in front of the filling station—the engine still roaring—and knocked on the door. Rustled out of bed, the station operator just cracked the door. When asked if they could get some gas right away, he said, "Just a minute. I'll put my trousers on!"

When he came outdoors and finally saw the vehicle he'd be servicing, the station attendant exclaimed, "What the devil is that?" When told it was an airplane, the man said, "I saw one fly over about two years ago, but that's the closest I've ever been to one!"

While filling up, the boys asked where they might find a good, flat field. The filling station owner directed them west on Highway 9, to an intersection about a mile away. There sat an old school lot, he said; its 30 acres held hay and the ground had not been plowed.

The four men taxied to the field. They closely inspected the plane for damage. Structurally, the craft was fine, but the emergency landing had packed mud into the wheel pants. Up in the high altitude's cold air, the mud could freeze, preventing a happy landing. To prevent any potential problems, the group decided the wheel pants needed to come off.

The job took longer than expected. "There was at least 50 little bolts and screws," remembered Glenn. "Our fingers about froze. Trying to work on those little screws with the equipment we had was quite a chore. But we finally got them off."

Then, in climbing into the plane, another problem arose: where to store the wheel pants? The small plane didn't have a luggage compartment. Only one option remained. "Brother Irvin and Fitzsimmons were in the forward seats," recalled Glenn. "My cousin and I sat in the back seat with these cold, big wheel pants on our laps. They were wet and full of mud and dirt."

Despite less than ideal conditions, the plane took off and headed for Chicago.

The weather still wouldn't make the trip easy. Snow accompanied the travelers most of the way. Although not as critical as the first time, a shortage of fuel would necessitate several more rough landings. "Only two places were we able to find airports," explained Glenn. "The rest of the time, we landed in farmers' fields. We would get them to take us by wagon into town to pick up gasoline, and bring us back out."

Finally they flew over the Windy City. From there, they followed the B&O tracks to familiar ground around Waterloo, then headed south. "We come in over our factory building at about 200 foot elevation, under a snow storm, and landed at the old Auburn Airport," remembered Glenn.

They had made it home!

The safe return wasn't taken lightly by the aviation adventurers. "Every day of our lives thereafter, we thanked the good Lord that he was watching over us on that trip!" said Glenn.

* * *

Thelma's mother suffered from diabetes. In early summer of 1935, the accumulated effects of the disease overtook her. Her condition deteriorated to the point that the doctor suggested her children be notified.

The Layden family tried to reach Thelma by phone. When she didn't answer at the Noirot boarding house, they tried the home of Glenn's folks. Coincidentally, the young engaged couple had just stopped in for a visit. The chilling call interrupted a happy day of planning their future life together. "We had been out renting the house on South Main Street where we were going to move after the wedding," remembered Thelma. Instead of making plans for the wedding, she made plans for a n emergency trip home.

The remainder of the day flew past quickly. "I called my brother in Fort Wayne," recalled Thelma. "We picked him up at midnight, then drove down to LaFayette."

Ima Layden had sunk into a coma. Her children had arrived just in time. "She lived until the next night, May 24," said Thelma.

Still reeling from her mother's quick demise, Thelma was broadsided again two weeks later when her beloved grandmother passed away. Two of the most influential people in her life were gone so suddenly!

Thelma and Glenn hadn't planned a big wedding to begin with, but the twin tragedies caused them to reduce the scale even further. They decided to invite their friends to a party of no particular theme, then sneak away during the afternoon with one other couple for the ceremony. At the party that evening, they would officially announce their marriage.

The Auburn house they had rented—1301 South Main Street—had a cherry tree in the backyard. Two weeks before the wedding, Glenn and Thelma picked the fruit, which they intended to turn into a lasting symbol of their love. "Glenn's mother and I pitted the cherries that evening," remembered Thelma. Meanwhile, Glenn borrowed one of TW's home-brew 10 gallon crocks. The cherries became wedding wine.

"It was real good," remembered Glenn. When he said this in 1998, his memory didn't need to stretch far. From the original batch, Glenn and Thelma saved three jugs. They opened one on their 25th anniversary, June 29, 1960; they opened the second on their 50th anniversary, June 29, 1985; and they opened the third on their 60th anniversary, June 29, 1995.

"We've still got about a quart left," noted Thelma. She and Glenn are saving it for their 65th anniversary in the summer of 2000.

Because the cherries were picked so close to the wedding date, the wine was never intended to be a refreshment at the party. For that celebration, Glenn wanted to serve whiskey. Although Prohibition had ended, the liquor was still scarce in Auburn, so Glenn approached TW for help. "My dad had a friend in Chicago, a man by the name of Liphold, who brewed his own whiskey and stored it in little wooden barrels of about five gallons," recalled Glenn. "I said, 'Dad, could you get Liphold to send one of those barrels down, because I'll probably need it.' So he did."

During final preparations for the wedding, the young couple decorated their rented home with new furniture. Money for the furnishings came from a disciplined savings program. Part of the reason Glenn and Thelma delayed their wedding for a year after Glenn's Purdue graduation had been to allow time to build a nestegg. Although top wages at RMPC were only 35 cents an hour, Glenn and Thelma both worked and, thereby, both contributed to the bank account. By keeping expenses down, they were able to save quite a bit. "You could furnish a house for about $400 or $500 at that time," said Glenn. "We bought beds, tables, chairs, and living room couches."

A few days before the blessed event, Glenn and Thelma invited Glenn's boyhood friend Fred Quance and his wife Erthenia (better known as "Tiny") to serve as witnesses. Since Glenn and Thelma didn't know Auburn's new Presbyterian minister, they made plans to drive to Fort Wayne where a former Auburn pastor, Rev. A.P. Bournes, served in the Fort Wayne Presbyterian Church.

At one o'clock, on Saturday, June 29, 1935, a simple ceremony took place in Rev. Bournes' Fort Wayne home. Glenn Theodore Rieke, dressed in a white summer suit, and Thelma Agnes Layden, dressed in a pretty white dress, spoke their vows. Fred, Tiny, the minister and Mrs. Bournes were the only witnesses.

After the ceremony, the newlyweds and their attendants drove to the Summit City's famous Berghoff Gardens restaurant. Attached to the south side of the 1908 Baltes Hotel at the corner of Berry and Harrison streets, the Berghoff had grown into a landmark eatery (the building stood at the corner until fire destroyed it June 3, 1964).

Perhaps testing fate a little too far, Glenn ordered spaghetti for his wedding feast. "The first meatball I stabbed into went up in the air, hit me right about here, and rolled all the way down this leg, leaving a red streak!" said Glenn. The white summer suit would never be worn again. "We've still got the suit," said Thelma 64 years later as she nodded toward a closet, "and it's still got the streak!"

After dinner, the couples drove to the Rieke family's Hamilton Lake cottage. Glenn, Thelma, Fred and Tiny spent the afternoon swimming and laying in the sun. When evening arrived, they changed clothes and drove to town for the party.

Little did they realize they were heading into an ambush.

Tiny Quance had mentioned the wedding plans to her mother. Tiny's mother in turn told her neighbor. Like the famous Norman Rockwell painting, word got around until it reached the Auburn Evening Star. When Glenn and Thelma arrived at their party, they learned that an announcement of their marriage had appeared in the paper that evening!

Aware that a wedding had prompted the party, the guests made plans of their own. Upon the honored guests' arrival, the new husband was shackled with a real steel ball and chain (he wore it the rest of that night). Then revelers herded the new couple and the Quances into a decorated calf cart. With Leonard Rathert driving, a small parade headed downtown.

"They pulled us around Auburn and the courthouse," said Glenn. "Of course, they had bells and stuff ringing, cars tooting their horns. That was the tradition at the time, called a 'belling.'"

Due to a mixture of high spirits and poor quality carts, bellings had grown into a dangerous tradition. The practice was soon stopped after the Glenn and Thelma's ride. Luckily, nothing happened on their special night.

Not to say it couldn't have. "The sides were going just like this," remembered Thelma, shaking her hands violently. "I was never so glad to get out of something in my life!"

Her fright wouldn't end when they returned home. The guests–fueled by the home-made whiskey—were trampling the new furniture. "Our guests gave the furniture the used look that night," said Thelma with resignation.

In hindsight, Glenn decided whiskey might not have been the best choice of beverage. "It was served like water in water glasses," he said. "The guests got pretty happy!"

Finally the celebration ebbed. The partyers went home. The young couple spent the first night together in their new, if soiled, home.

* * *

The next morning, Glenn and Thelma packed their bags into a Plymouth they'd bought at a Fort Wayne used car lot. They drove to Detroit where they caught the DNC (Detroit 'N Cleveland) ferry which took them and their vehicle up the Great Lakes. After passing Cleveland, they disembarked at Buffalo. From there they drove the final leg to the Canadian side of Niagara Falls.

To get an overview of Niagara sights, the young couple hired a taxi cab for a drive around the area. The driver turned out to be an original character. "He was with us for several hours," said Glenn. "When he wasn't showing us something, he would recite one verse after another from 'The Shooting of Dan McGrew,' by the famous Yukon poet Robert Service."

Through their taxi ride, Glenn and Thelma saw the falls from both the American and Canadian sides. They decided to get a still closer look from beneath the falls by taking a ride on the famous tourist boat *Queen of the Mist*.

Just before the ride, Glenn

snapped a picture of Thelma in her tourist-issue raincoat and hat.

* * *

By July of 1935, the Dionne Quintuplets of World's Fair fame were just over a year old—and wards of the state. Tourists from around the world, drawn by the miracle birth, were traveling in increasing numbers to the small community of Callander, Ontario.

Glenn and Thelma decided, they too, would take a squint at the quints. "While we were at Niagara, we learned you could see them, so we decided to try," said Glenn.

They never made it. "We got halfway up and the gears went out of the rear end of our car," Glenn said. "The repairs cost $27 and took all but $10 of our money. So we had to turn around and come back home!"

Along the way, the young couple noticed a sign announcing collie pups for sale. They couldn't resist. "I bought a pup for a couple of dollars," said Glenn. "That was our first baby."

They named the puppy "Prince."

* * *

For the first year of their marriage, Glenn and Thelma lived at the South Main Street address. "The house was very open with a beautiful stairway off

The "Shooting of Dan McGrew" isn't necessarily the poetry of choice for a honeymoon, but it's a love story none the less. It begins like this:

A bunch of the boys were whooping it up in the Malamute saloon;
The kid that handles the music-box was hitting a jag-time tune;
Back of the bar, in a solo game, sat Dangerous Dan McGrew,
And watching his luck was his light-o'-love,
the lady that's known as Lou ...

As the verses continue, a stranger walks in the bar, orders drinks all around, then sits at the piano and plays music that touches the hard men's hearts. Suddenly, the piano player stops, introduces himself to the room and says:

But I want to state, and my words are straight,
and I'll bet my poke they're true,
That one of you is a hound of hell ... and that one is Dan McGrew."
Then I ducked my head, and the lights went out,
and two guns blazed in the dark,
And a woman screamed, and the lights went up,
and two men lay stiff and stark.
Pitched on his head, and pumped full of lead,
was Dangerous Dan McGrew,
While the man from the creeks lay clutched to the breast
of the lady that's known as Lou ...

For a few moments during the honeymoon, Thelma was Queen of the Mist.

a big living room," remembered Glenn. It seemed the perfect setting for a storybook beginning.

Although the Great Depression still choked the national economy, in Glenn and Thelma's two-income home money was not a major concern. Glenn's check at the time totaled $35. "And believe it or not," he said, "we saved plenty out of that every week!"

Before 1935 ended, the couple decided they could survive on one income. Thelma quit her job to become a full-time housewife. Her chores included grocery shopping at City Market on the northeast corner of Seventh and Jackson streets. Completing the domestic scene, the puppy named Prince turned into a fine in-door dog.

As is often the case, however, what appeared perfect wasn't. As winter approached, cold weather quickly uncovered the shortcomings of the little house. The open design that made it so attractive also made it a chilly monster to heat. "By January, we couldn't stand it," said Glenn. "We were cold!"

The outdoor temperature seemed to leak right through the walls of the little house. Its heating system proved unable to stem the assault. "We had the fireplace going all the time," Glenn remembered. "We couldn't keep heat in that house and it was a terrible cold winter!"

The young couple began to consider finding other living arrangement options.

* * *

The newlyweds pose with Prince in their Main Street backyard.

Despite his growing domesticity, Glenn continued to dream of adventures. Right after RMPC's visit to the World's Fair, he and Leonard Rathert began making their own ornitator, or simulated airplane. Working on the second floor of the RMPC plant, they placed a shaft through a wingless airplane body and mounted it on a huge horseshoe frame.

"You could do anything with it you could do with an airplane, except crash land," reported Glenn. "We could roll it, spin it, make loops in it. It was big enough for one person and a lot of fun to fly!"

Throughout the summer of 1935, Glenn and Leonard flew the ornitator just for kicks. Then, that fall, the Gooding Carnival arrived for its annual visit to Auburn. The carnival set up for business in the field now occupied by DeKalb Memorial Hospital.

The fair's visit lit a light bulb above the heads of Glenn and Leonard. They decided to put their ornitator to work.

"We set it up in a vacant lot right across the Cedar Creek Bridge on Seventh Street," explained Glenn. "All the people would have to go by us to get to the carnival. When they saw this ride—and they'd never seen anything like it before—everybody stopped. We had a crowd around us that never went out to the carnival. We would take people up for a ride. It was a ball!"

The house at 1301 South Main Street still retained its charm in 1998.

A photo of the ornitator exhibit shows the 12-foot-high, top-heavy horseshoe frame mounted on cement blocks. At the apex sits the wingless plane. Two-by-fours have been driven into the ground to hold electrical service, a light and sign. The sign reads, "Fly with one foot on the ground; With controls like an airplane; slow roll, snap roll, inside loop, tail spin, natural position, try your skill at flying, for the price of only 35 cents."

Glenn recalled that he and Leonard didn't take the business of selling rides too seriously. "We were a couple of young kids," he said. "We set an armchair up to sit in while waiting for customers." Despite their comfortable arrangements, the young men didn't want to spend much time sitting. "When we'd get a few dollars in our pocket, we'd close up business and go spend what we made at the rest of the carnival booths," said Glenn with a chuckle. "Then, when we run out of money, my cousin and I would run the ornitator a few more times!"

The carefree duo's lark didn't please the fair's hawks. "We had more of a crowd than they had at the carnival," Glenn explained. "The carnival got a little put out because we were disturbing their business!"

Representatives of the fair visited the ornitator and voiced their concerns. "You're just ruining our business out here," they said. "We're not getting any people. That's not fair!" Glenn recalled replying, "If you don't like us doing this, why don't you let us join you?"

The fair organizers thought that might not be a bad idea. A deal was struck. The remainder of that fall in 1935, Glenn and Leonard took their ornitator on the road. "The fair played in Garrett, Auburn, LaPorte, and Kendallville," said Glenn. "Altogether, there was four different places we played that season." The boys thoroughly enjoyed making money off their handiwork.

But back at RMPC, TW wasn't doing any acrobatics. One day he shot his feelings point blank at Glenn, "I send you to college for four years and you join the god-damned carnival!" he said.

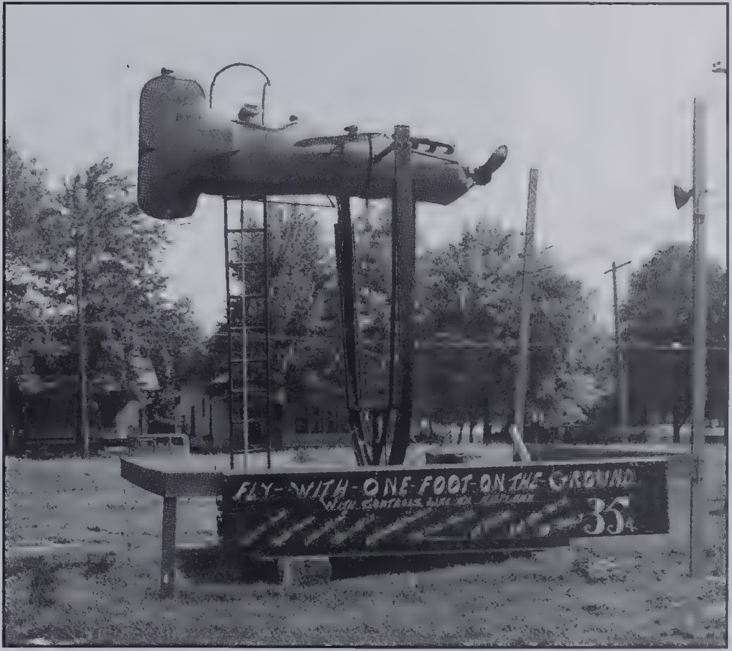
Glenn didn't need to hear more. The ornitator ended its road show and Glenn and Leonard renewed their interest in more serious business.

* * *

Shortly afterward, Glenn took the ornitator up to Angola Airport. There he traded the flight simulator to the man who had tested him for a pilot's license, Paul Eyster. In exchange for the ornitator, Eyster gave Glenn a bi-wing Waco airplane.

The Waco was powered by a World War I-era, OX-5 motor, which held a dominant role in America's early aviation history. "I'd call it the 'Ford' of the airplane industry," said Glenn. "The OX-5 was the main engine used in all light airplanes in that era."

The Waco would play a significant role in Glenn's personal history. It was, after all, the first of many airplanes he would own.



The ornitator stops crowds on the way to the DeKalb County Free Fall Fair. The noise of its authentic airplane engine helped attract attention.

Glenn traded the ornitator for his first airplane. Thelma shows off the front of the Waco-9 (top) while Glenn checks the pilot's seat (bottom). Years later, the Waco's OX-5 engine enjoyed cult-like attention. Glenn received a certificate signifying he flew an OX-5 powered plane.

IRVIN'S INFLUENCE

Chapter Thirteen

TW Rieke's influence on his middle son can't be calculated. TW taught Glenn the importance of accuracy in all things, to honestly confront mistakes, to love outdoor life, and to work hard to make dreams come true. Without TW, the company that bears the family name and served as the broad background of Glenn's career never would have come into being.

That said, the single most influential person in Glenn's life was his older brother. Irvin not only taught Glenn the family business, he weened him on its responsibility. Then, when the time came, Irvin gave his younger brother plenty of freedom to operate. In their time away from work, Irvin not only showed Glenn how to live on the edge, in large measure the two men shared the same adventures.

Irvin put family interests before his own. That philosophy becomes clear in his relationship with Glenn. Ten years older, Irvin certainly might have dominated his younger brother; he chose not to. Irvin's role was one of mentor to student. Then, when the pupil could fly on his own, Irvin stepped back and became Glenn's biggest cheerleader.

This nurturing support was not lost on Glenn. After Irvin's death on July 26, 1988, Glenn was asked to add a few words at the memorial service. He rose and simply said, "He was the best brother any man could ever expect to have!"

* * *

Even Irvin's misfortune turned to advantage for Glenn

By 1931, Irvin's first marriage had crumbled. He had met Edna Tough when the Rieke family still lived in Chicago. The couple married in the Windy City in 1923. With RMPC's move to Auburn that same year, Irvin and Edna relocated in the small town. Over the next several years, they lived in two or three rental homes. A daughter, Dorothy, blessed the union March 4, 1925. Probably in 1929, Irvin hired a contractor to build a fashionable cottage home at 1151 North Van Buren.

Despite the idyllic setting, Edna remained at heart a big city girl. Tension that had been present since the wedding grew. In 1931, the same year that RMPC experienced its devastating fire and bought a new building, Irvin and Edna quietly divorced. Edna moved back to Chicago taking Dorothy with her. Irvin moved back in with his parents and rented the cottage home to an employee of Auburn Automobile Company.

The little house would witness more emotional upheaval. Auburn Automobile Company's fortunes rode a roller coaster from 1931 to 1936. That first year, the company recorded its highest profits ever. Within five years, the bottom had dropped out. AAC connected its name with fine living. The Cord and Duesenberg-brand cars set the tone. Ads showed the automobiles in country club settings. Their high styling and innovative engineering outpaced the competition—and most people's pocketbooks.

Dorothy felt attachment to Auburn

Despite living away from Auburn for large chunks of time, Irvin's child with Edna Tough remained attached to her native town.

After her parent's 1931 divorce, Dorothy lived with her mother in Chicago. Then, after attending high school in the big city, Dorothy moved back to Auburn.

She met and married a Chicago man, Ed Waluk, who worked as a machinist. The couple lived in Chicago, then moved to Auburn.

Upon Waluk's death, Dorothy stayed in Auburn where she still lived at the time of this writing.

This is where EL Cord worked his marketing magic. The cars carrying the Auburn brand name resembled their high class sisters, yet remained modestly priced. The gist of the sales pitch went like this: if you can't afford a Duesenberg or Cord, buy an Auburn and you'll at least look wealthy.

Then the stock market crashed and the Depression descended. Where it had been fashionable to appear wealthy in the roaring 1920s, during the hardbitten 1930s, America turned its back on ostentatious displays of wealth. In a complete turnabout, instead of being admired and emulated, the wealthy came to be viewed as contemptible. Honesty and virtue in bucking overwhelming odds were valued over money and titles. This trend is exposed in popular entertainment. The 1930s spawned comic book heroes like Lil' Abner and Joe Palooka, and movies like the Marx Brothers' Duck Soup. In all these venues, non-too-bright but honest lead characters carry the day. Wealth identifies bad guys as clearly as a black hat.

Under EL Cord, AAC had been able to forecast trends, not succumb to them. But during this period, Cord went through his own personal and professional turmoil. When he looked the other way, competing factions at his car companies fought among themselves. During the time that Cord lived in Europe, the company decided to pull a new line of Auburn bodies and, three-quarters of the way through the model year, introduced a second redesigned line!

Cord returned to America about the time the second 1934 models puttered off the assembly line. Still, his attention remained elsewhere. His mammoth transportation empire was slipping from his grasp. Cars would have to take a back seat.

Mistakes and red ink continued to flow. In a last-ditch effort of redemption, AAC nurtured an expensive secret project. At car shows in the fall of 1935, the company introduced the front-wheel-drive Cord 810. The car's low-slung, blunt-nosed design—the first to eliminate running boards—stunned the car world. Orders poured in, including one from TW Rieke!. Eager customers didn't realize that the 810 prototypes had been so rushed, most of them did not have transmissions!

Under a crush of demand, AAC rushed the car from prototype to production. By early 1936, the wheels had come off the deception. Customers in effect became the 810's test drivers and they found multiple problems. AAC employees worked hard to overcome the defects, but they were swamped by the number of cars returned. Complaints grew louder. Word spread that the 810 was beautiful outside, but a lemon inside. Sales plummeted.

The Cord 810 gamble had almost paid off, but in the end, AAC's lovely swan song hastened the company's death. The doors of the company closed for good in 1937.

The AAC employee who rented Irvin's house moved onto another job by the spring of 1936. The cozy little cottage home, built with so much hope and promise, sat empty.

Still shivering from their winter in the South Main Street rental home, Glenn and Thelma struck a deal with Irvin. "We made arrangements to pay him so much a month and buy his

This is how 1151 North Van Buren Street appeared about the time Glenn and Thelma moved there. The house looks as good or better today.

house," said Glenn. About the same time, Irvin gave Glenn a raise. Casual observers might see these two events as a big brother trying to help his little brother. The little brother, always ready to poke his big brother in the ribs, saw it differently. "I think Irvin increased my pay so that he would be sure to get his money!" Glenn said and chuckled. Thelma added weight to the theory. She recalled that Irvin automatically deducted the house payment from Glenn's check to ensure he received it on time.

However the deal is viewed, there could be no dispute about the simple virtues of the house itself. Glenn and Thelma found it a perfect fit. They were far enough from downtown to enjoy a hint of country living, yet conveniences remained within reach. Directly across Main Street set a Sinclair service station and a store named Main Street Groceries. For more extensive shopping, Thelma visited the Little Dutch Grocery on North Street (a homey sign still marked the tiny store's door in 1999). "It was small, but if they didn't have something, they'd get it for you," she remembered.

Glenn, right, and his good friend Fred Quance built by hand this stone barbecue in the backyard of 1151 North Van Buren. The little structure still stood in early 2000.

For major shopping excursions, Thelma needed only to walk beside the interurban train tracks, which ran along the east side of their home. Passengers could board the electric train at the intersection of Cedar and Seventh streets. The interurban made a day-long trip to Fort Wayne a simple, uncluttered proposition.

Auburnites made constant use of the modest train's convenience. "It was just like a streetcar," remembered Thelma. "It kept swaying along. First you were leaning this way, then you were leaning that way!" In an indication of how interurbans held sway over automobiles in transportation of the time, consider this: State Road 427—the main highway to Fort Wayne those 30 years before Interstate 69—still was not paved!

The interurban was a link in a thoroughly reliable chain of public transportation that has since been lost to history. With the ease of using a bus, Thelma could ride the interurban to her childhood home. After changing trains in Fort Wayne, she would travel to Logansport, and onto LaFayette. If the Riekes wished to spend a day in lake country, they could ride another spur west to Kendallville or north to Angola.

Although human members of the family appreciated the interurban, Prince wasn't quite as certain in his feelings. By then nicknamed Pal, the collie spent most of his day in the Van Buren Street home's fenced-in backyard. On each of the train's daily trips, Pal waited in ambush. As the swaying monster passed his domain, Pal erupted in a chorus of barks and took chase. His persistence wore a broad, bare path just inside the hedge.

* * *

Almost simultaneously with their move to Irvin's Auburn house, Glenn and Thelma planned a trip to Irvin's Montana ranch. The visit would not be a vacation: Irvin had asked Glenn to use his civil engineering education to construct an irrigation system on the Ox Bow's farmable fields. So, on Mother's Day, 1936, Glenn and Thelma loaded up the Plymouth and headed west.

Irvin estimated the project would take a month of labor. On his arrival, Glenn found the task more complicated than his brother imagined. Holter Dam held back the Missouri River in a valley between the Bear Tooth Mountains. The backed up water formed a lake 18 miles long. Four miles of the lake shore were within the Ox Bow's boundaries. Sloping flatlands rose from the lake for about a mile, offering about 500 acres of arable land criss-crossed with arroyos and ditches. Irvin wanted the irrigation system to provide water to an additional 250 acres. To get water up the sloping, broad expanse would require a pumping station, cradles, trestles, bulkheads and extensive piping.

Glenn decided to divide the project into two separate systems. Using 8-inch pipe, he would direct water down from a mountain stream. Using 16-inch pipe, he would pump water up out of Holter Lake.

Ranch contained historic site

At the south end the Ox Bow Ranch could be found a geographically and historically-significant landmark.

"By boat, it appeared you were heading into a blank wall," said Glenn. "Then, as you approached the wall from a slight angle, a vertical crack began to form, as if a gate was opening for you. When you got there, you would see an opening between 1,000-foot-high rock walls that were about 200 feet apart."

Geographically, the site is significant. It marks the point that the Missouri River breaks free of the Rocky Mountains on its trip to joining the Mississippi River. Historically, the site became significant in 1805 when Lewis and Clark passed through. They named the rock walls, "The Gates of the Mountains."

"The smaller line got its water out of a mountain stream which was absorbed before it reached the bottom," Glenn explained. "We built a dam across the stream and run pipe from about 800 feet elevation to the fields below." Allowing gravity to pull at the water over such a long expanse of pipe created great pressure. "We had a big valve on the end of the pipeline," said Glenn. "When you opened that valve, water would shoot out over 200 feet!"

The bigger pipe offered the opposite challenge—pulling water reluctantly uphill against gravity. "The 16-inch line, which was about a mile long, pumped water out of Holter Lake," said Glenn. "At first we installed a 100-horsepower, 120-volt electric motor at the lake and hooked it up to a big suction pump. The electric motor later was replaced by a diesel engine."

As with any large project, adjustments had to be made after the initial installation. "You'd go out in the morning and hear the 16-inch pipes squeaking and cracking!" remembered Glenn. "The whole system was shifting downhill to the point that it pushed the pump house out further into the water." To counteract this force, Glenn built big concrete bulkheads at intervals around the pipe to anchor the system.

Resources with which to complete the mammoth job were meager. Glenn and one hired hand named Wallace

This pumphouse in Holter Lake provided water to the 16-inch irrigation system Glenn installed at the Ox Bow in the summer of 1936.

supplied all the manpower. Mechanical power was provided by a lone tractor, a mule, and team of horses.

Both pipe sizes came in 40-foot lengths which arrived by train in Wolf Creek, the little town about four miles from the Ox Bow. Flanges could be found at either end of a length of pipe. After placing a special rubber gasket between flanges, two pipes were fastened together with 3/8-inch bolts. To protect the metal from rusting, the pipes were covered with tar inside and out. In the hot Montana summer sun, the tar quickly became a sticky mess.

As might be expected, Irvin's initial time-line for the project proved unrealistic. "We spent the whole summer there!" said Glenn with a laugh.

Despite the project's difficulties, Irvin's confidence that his younger brother could complete the job never wavered. Indicative of this trust, he didn't feel his presence at the ranch was necessary. In fact, while Glenn wrestled with irrigation pipe, Irvin stayed in Auburn. Even had he wanted to join the fun in Montana, two areas of responsibilities clipped Irvin's wings. First of all, TW needed him to run the RMPC plant. And secondly, an important personal event in Irvin's life had been scheduled in town late that summer.

On August 1, 1936, Irvin married his secretary, Hilda Turner.

As soon as they were able to get away, the new couple jumped in a car and headed west. Before warm weather ended, Irvin and Hilda joined Glenn and Thelma at the Ox Bow.

* * *

Despite design and time difficulties, Glenn found unbounded pleasure in working on Irvin's ranch. It was as if his early childhood had created an unquenchable appetite for rough, open terrain and outdoor activity.

Thelma, on the other hand, considered ranch life an ironic twist to her aspirations. Growing up, she'd had her fill of the farm. In following her new husband, however, she found herself once again handling horses and filling grain sacks.

The work wouldn't have been hard to handle if it were the only way in which the ranch needled Thelma. But the Ox Bow for some reason decided to make Glenn's new bride the butt of its ranch humor.

Glenn couldn't help laughing as he explained: "There was a billy goat named 'Satan.' He found out women were afraid of him, so every time he'd see a skirt, he'd put his head down and take after it. The girls learned to carry something in their hand to smack him on the nose when he got too close. As long as they had something in their hand, Satan would stay back—but he'd come as close as he could!"

One day during harvest, Irvin, Glenn and a group of hired men were threshing wheat in the fields. Photos show they used a steam tractor to cut the stalks and an old Case thresher to remove the grain.

Thelma walked out to the work site carrying cold water. To keep her ever-present adversary at bay, she swung a short length of chain. Despite the warning, Satan stayed uncomfortably close by.

Glenn picked up the story: "All of a sudden, the ring on the chain hooked onto one of the goat's horns. He felt it and knew he had her. Satan put his head down and started for her. Peg let out a scream and started running."

Nearby set a big bobsled used to haul hay. Thelma ran for it and, with a big jump, landed on top. Unbeknownst to her, Satan followed and stood just out of sight behind her.

"Peg let out a sigh of relief," said Glenn. "Then, when she turned around and saw Satan, she let out another scream and dove head first on the ground." Glenn laughed long and hard. "Old Billy got down and stood right on top of her!" he said. "She's laying in the dust and dirt, screamin', with Satan holding her down!"

The harvest crew found Thelma's predicament hilarious. They laughed for a good long while instead of intervening. Glenn paid a price for his procrastination. "Thelma didn't think it was funny at all," he said. "She wouldn't talk to me for a couple of days after that!"

Thelma wasn't one to take humiliation lying down. She and Hilda plotted revenge on two of the men who laughed. "One evening, the foreman and his man had been on horseback all day, rounding up cattle in the mountains," Glenn explained. "It's tough riding up and down hills. The men were half asleep in the saddle."

Thelma and Satan share a rare quiet moment.

The women saw the tired men riding into the ranch yard and decided they looked too relaxed. They hid behind the barn. "When the men got near the barn, the girls jumped out and screamed," said Glenn. "The horses reared and damn near threw the men. They were both pretty good riders, so they stayed in the saddle, but it woke them up real quick!"

The tone of the summer had been

set. Other practical jokes followed.

The hired men figured it was their turn to set a trap for the women. Knowing either Thelma or Hilda usually visited the outhouse first each morning, the men planned to have them greeted by an unwelcoming host.

Satan.

The billy goat was shut tight in the toilet one evening. The timing was intended to allow long hours for his indignation to rise. But Satan didn't understand his role. He unleashed his fury early and made an escape during the night.

The next morning, Irvin's daughter broke tradition and went to the outhouse first for a morning constitutional. Dorothy ran back to the house in a tizzy. "Daddy!" she said to Irvin, "Something's happened! There's no wall in the outhouse!"

Despite limiting his participation to laughing at another's misfortune, Glenn wouldn't escape the practical jokers' barbs. As in the other brands of ranch humor, the joke took the form of a dangerous situation.

"We were branding calves and cows; we'd catch them and Irvin and his foreman would do the branding," Glenn explained. "They had me set on the animal's head so it couldn't get up." As Glenn laid prone across one animal and watched the branding iron do its work, the foreman slipped the loop of a lariat over his outstretched foot.

"This cow had a calf and she was mad as the devil. Just squawlin'!" Glenn recalled. Irvin—who was in on the joke—said, "Glenn, when we leave this animal up, you hightail it for the rail right away." Irvin and the foreman got out of harm's way and while sitting on the fence shouted, "Okay, let her go!" Glenn recalled what happened next: "I jumped up and took one step. The foreman jerked the lariat tight and tripped me. As I fell down, that old cow went right over top of me!"

Glenn, left, holds a calf's head while Wallace Hoge (Mildred's late husband) brands it during the summer of 1936.

Luckily, none of the flying hooves did any damage, but the joke had its desired effect. "Scared the hell out of me!" said Glenn.

Finally, that long western summer wound to a close. The thought of leaving the ranch gave Glenn moments of reflection. Like Irvin, he got a thrill of satisfaction out of a rough and tumble lifestyle. "We'd go out at daybreak and round up three or four hundred head of cattle in the mountains, and come back at night just wore out," he said. "Your seat was really pounding. But that was the work we enjoyed."

One especially interesting challenge reared itself when, late in the season the ranch needed more riding horses. "Semi-wild horses ran in packs in the mountains," Glenn explained. "We'd go up there and rope the ones we wanted, bring them back down and break them to ride."

Right before Thanksgiving, the end of the adventure arrived. In a symbolic good-bye to Montana, Glenn mounted a horse and rode alone into the mountains. Through his own wits and resources, he shot his first deer. The solitary hunting trip served as a rite of passage.

Glenn would return to the mountains again and again.

* * *

Perhaps Glenn's love of Montana began even earlier than childhood. Perhaps it came wrapped in a rugged gene passed down from his father.

Despite the struggle and heartbreak of the homestead, TW could never break the bonds with which the open range held him. Continually he felt pulled back to the land.

At first the calling manifested itself near home. During his 16 years in Auburn, TW bought three DeKalb County farms. "He still liked the farming life," explained Glenn. "Dad would go out and work on the farms, do a lot of building. I remember he and I put in a pond on one of the farms. It covers about two acres of ground in the woods. We diverted water from a county ditch and stocked it with fish." That particular farm resides on Hamilton Road, halfway between Waterloo and Hamilton. "It's the only big dairy farm on the right hand side of the road," Glenn said.

TW's second farm sits three miles east of Auburn, and the third can be found about a mile north of Waterloo, on the road that goes by the cemetery.

But the most telling evidence of farming's magical hold on TW's soul made itself apparent that wonderful summer of 1936. While Glenn and Thelma worked on Irvin's ranch, TW and Mary drove to Montana in their brand new Cord 810. They didn't stop at the Ox Bow, for they were on a mission of their own.

They found what they were looking for within five miles of the Continental Divide. There TW bought his own spread and named it the Arctic Circle Ranch.

TW bought the Arctic Circle Ranch in Montana in 1936.

* * *

More than any previous year, 1936 indicated a continental shift in the Rieke family's fortunes. Barrel manufacturers had begun to trust RMPC technology and appreciate its advantages. The company's market share—and profits—grew.

TW had reached his goal. His family, if they chose, could live on Easy Street. In the Rieke scheme of things, though, removing money worries simply provided freedom to pursue recreational hard work and adventures of their choice.

With Glenn growing into a leadership role at the plant, Irvin spent more and more time in Montana. Beginning in 1936, he split his time evenly between his two homes. Then in 1941, Irvin hired Rollie Muhn and his Auburn crew to travel to Montana and build a new ranch house on the Ox Bow. In 1952, only 51 years old, Irvin moved permanently to the mountain valley. He would return to Auburn several times a year to declare dividends and take care of other formal business concerns. But, from this point on, the company was for all practical purposes in Glenn's hands.

In no way, could Irvin's Montana ranch existence be called a retirement. He worked the ranch, building a herd of 1,000 head of cattle. He experimented with various bovine strains, including buffalo.

He invented farm machinery which attracted national attention. "Conventional suppliers didn't have the kind of equipment on the market that could handle big operations," explained Glenn. "So Irvin built his own tractor. It had a General Motors 800-horsepower tank engine. Everything was hydraulic. It could pull 12 big-bottom plows across that hard ground effortlessly. Irvin could turn that damn thing around on a dime because he built it so all four wheels turned."

Rollie Muhn had generous soul

Rollie Muhn, the contractor who conducted many of the Rieke's construction projects, was an Auburn legend for more than his magic with a hammer. For over 40 years, Muhn made Christmas happier for the children of the St. Vincent Villa Orphans Home in Fort Wayne.

Rollie's role as Santa Claus grew out of a boyhood promise. When he was just 14, Muhn built his first house. The widowed woman who hired him also employed a 12-year-old boy from St. Vincent. Muhn and the orphan became fast friends.

At Christmas time, the orphan cried because he had no gifts. Muhn was deeply touched. Remembering a preacher's words that said you should talk to God with your shoes off, Muhn and the boy took off their shoes and prayed together. They promised that, as adults, they would buy gifts for the St. Vincent orphans.

A few years later, both young men served in the US armed forces during World War I. Muhn survived; the orphan did not.

In 1926, Muhn first fulfilled his promise to his friend and God. In 1930, he began to deliver his gifts dressed as Santa. Over time, the orphans began to write letters to "Santa." He fulfilled gift requests through donations by Auburn businessmen, such as BO FInk and TW Rieke.

Irvin also invented a payloader specially designed to pick up hay bales and load them on a wagon. "This loader was so unique a couple of companies—one of them John Deere—sent engineers out to Irvin's ranch," said Glenn. "They had heard about the machine and spent a couple of days going over it."

About two years after the visits, one of the companies began selling a payloader based on Irvin's design. "In other words," said Glenn, "Irvin saw the equivalent of his machines on other ranches with the company's brand name on it!" Like his father, Irvin immersed himself in the practical side of business, not its administration. He hadn't protected his ideas from the company and, in return, never got a cent when companies copied his ideas. "But that was him," said Glenn. To Irvin, visits by engineers were his reward, copying his design was his flattery.

Besides, in areas in which he sought financial success, Irvin found it.

From the time Bill Fitzsimmons

introduced him to airplanes until the end of his life, Irvin's interest in aviation grew. He kept adding licenses until he was qualified to fly big, twin-engined planes. Later in life, he owned an airplane sales and service operation at Billings Airport in Billings, Montana. "He had exclusive rights over about three states in which to sell Piper Aircraft," said Glenn. Financially, the enterprise soared.

Making money didn't rule Irvin's life, however. Unlike his father, the eldest Rieke son lived a life balanced between work and recreation. Many of Glenn's stories of the ranch revolve around the brothers' adventures once the work was done.

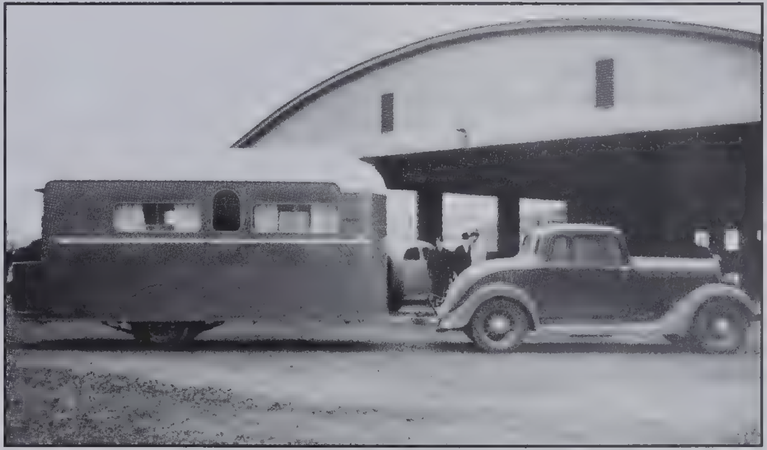
"Brother Irvin had all kinds of animals at the ranch," said Glenn in starting one story. "One day the game warden come over and said, 'Irv, there's a pet deer down on the main highway between Helena and Great Falls. Why don't you go get it? People feed it out of their hand and it's begging on the highway. We're afraid that some car is going to hit it.'"

Not long afterwards, Glenn, Irvin and the ranch foreman got in a truck and drove over to the location. They found the deer easily, but getting the

Glenn built a house on wheels

Like his older brother, Glenn seemed always to be involved in some inventive construction project. For example, over the winter of 1937, he built a camping trailer.

"It was made mostly out of wood, except for a steel framework on two wheels," Glenn explained. "The outside was covered with heavy cloth fabric, like on an airplane. I painted that with several coats of lacquer to protect the cloth. It gave the outside skin the appearance of metal." Glenn gave the vehicle a two-toned paint job. A large, rounded luggage trunk sat on an extended back bumper. Windows front, side and back let in lots of light. In size the trailer dwarfed Glenn and Thelma's Plymouth. Overall, from the outside the camper looked much like a modern horse trailer.



Inside, the camper slept four people and featured a kitchen and bathroom. Glenn installed a sink into which a pump brought water up from a pressure tank.

Glenn built the camper on the third floor of the RMPC plant. Special consideration had to be given to getting it out of its upper-story womb. "It wouldn't fit in the service elevator, so we attached a chain to the tongue and dropped it down the elevator shaft vertically," said Glenn. "I had to watch my measurements to make sure it would fit in the shaft."

The trailer became a work horse. Glenn and Thelma used it often thereafter for weekend fishing trips and extended vacations.

wild animal in the vehicle proved to be a challenge. "Irv and his foreman tried to put the loop over the animal's head, but it would shy away from them," said Glenn. "The deer was getting more nervous all the time."

Finally, Glenn said, "Let me have that bucket of oats. I know how to get that deer." He made a slip knot in the lariat and hung it over his arm. "I took the bucket like this, holding it out," said Glenn, showing how he held in the oats just below the slip knot. "The deer come up and put his head down in the bucket. I picked the loop up, dropped it over his head and stepped back."

The ingenious plan worked, but the adventure had just begun. "Boy, all hell broke loose!" said Glenn. "That deer went straight up in the air trying to get that rope off its neck. Its feet were just a-flying. I hung on to the rope and finally got far enough away that I wasn't afraid of him anymore. Then I pulled the rope around a tree . We snugged him down and caught him that way."

The men took the deer to the Ox Bow. Irvin put the wild animal inside a 10-foot-high fence. The next morning when the men came out to check on the deer, it was gone!

That evening Irvin received a second call from the game warden. "I thought you got that deer," the game warden said. "But he's back here today!" Glenn laughed. "The deer came right back over the mountain to the same spot on the highway," he said. Irvin's animal charity had reached its limit. He didn't attempt a second rescue.

Rollie Muhn built this stucco ranch house for Irvin at the Ox Bow.

Many of Glenn and Irvin's adventures happened during hunting trips.

For about 15 years, from 1943 to the late 1950s, Glenn invited a group of RMPC customers to the Ox Bow in the fall. "We'd have a big layout of entertainment for them," he explained. "We'd use about a dozen horses, pack in all the provisions, and ride into the mountains. The trips would vary from 10 miles up to 25 miles to go hunting for elk, deer, bear, mountain goats."

Although the trips aimed for fun and enjoyment, their rugged aspect contained elements of danger.

In 1945, a pack horse fell victim to circumstances. "We were on a narrow ledge cut in the rock about 150 feet above a lake formed by a dam in the Sun River," Glenn explained. "We had 10 or 12 pack horses loaded down with equipment. One of the horses, for some reason, lost his footing and went over the side! Fell into the water and drowned. It was impossible to get him out. There wasn't any way to get down to him; we were clinging to sheer walls."

Then on a 1947 hunting trip, tragedy assumed a human face.

"A man about 60 years of age struggled into our camp about dark," said Glenn. "He was exhausted and beside himself. Incoherent. We finally got him to settle down and found out what was wrong."

The man said he was from California. He and his son had been hunting on horseback about three miles from the Rieke group's camp when they saw a deer go into a clump of Aspen trees. The father told his son to go to the other side of the clump of trees, then they'd proceed together to flush out the deer. After the boy left, the father saw something move. He shot. His aim proved tragically true.

He had hit his son in the head and killed him.

"We had to take turns setting up that night to keep that guy from committing suicide," remembered Glenn. "We hid the guns. He couldn't go to sleep. He was up practically all night, prowling around."

The next morning, the Rieke group took the distraught father to the nearest ranger station. Officials made arrangements to transport the man and his son's body home. "We went back and hunted the rest of the week," said Glenn. "But that was really sad to see. Ruined our trip. It was terrible!"

Of course, hunting trips provided happy moments also. Glenn and Irvin were thrilled with an opportunity they received in August of 1953. "Irvin had a friend who had been a game warden for the Montana Forest Service and had then been stationed in Homer, Alaska," Glenn said. "He arranged for us to take hunting trips on the Alaskan mainland, across from Kodiak Island, for the big Kodiak bears."

During one of his Montana hunting trips, Glenn bagged four white mountain goats.

Glenn, Dr. Covell of Auburn and Irvin made the trip. From Homer, a bush pilot and guide named Paul Shoquet flew the hunters to a choice spot and landed along the water's edge. After agreeing on a pick-up time, Shoquet would leave the hunters to their own devices.

During one such day trip, Glenn hunted alone. "Shoquet took me across Cook Inlet, a distance of about 35 miles, and set me down on a sand strip along a glacial stream," Glenn said. "As we were coming in for a landing, we saw a large Alaska brown bear standing on its hind feet, eating leaves from a tree."

When the plane landed, the bear ambled off into the timber. Shoquet looked at his watch. It was 5:30 a.m. He told Glenn he would return to pick him up at 4:30 p.m.

Unfortunately, the area didn't live up to its early promise. "I didn't see any more bears that day," said Glenn. From his own aviation experience, however, Glenn did spy a situation that gave him the shudders. "I spent half my time making the landing strip a little longer," he said. "I was concerned we'd need the extra runway to take off with my weight added to the plane."

On another day, the pilot flew Glenn to a new spot. "As we were coming in, I saw two moose in a marshy area," Glenn recalled. "We had to land about a quarter of a mile away on a beach, then I went over to where the moose were."

Glenn told the story while sitting in his home office. He leaned back in his chair and pointed to a moose head on the wall, then to the gun rack. "I knocked this one down with that 300 magnum with the curly maple stock," he said. The trophy moose rack measured 47 inches from tip to tip.

Dropping the animal proved to be the easiest chore on the day of the hunt. "I had hip boots on, but on that marshy ground you'd take a step and sink down about a foot!" Glenn recalled. "I had at least a quarter a mile of country like that to walk through to get to where the moose fell."

On the first trip to the animal, Glenn butchered and "caped" the head (removed the hide for mounting). He cut the horns from the skull with a hand saw he kept in his hunting kit. Then he skinned and quartered the body.

Next he needed to transport the moose parts to where the plane would land. "I had a pack board I could carry on my back," Glenn explained. "A hind quarter of this moose weighed about 125 pounds. I would trudge through that marsh and deposit a load. Then I'd come back for another. I made six, seven trips that day, packing meat and hide out." Glenn fired the fatal shots about 6 a.m. At 4:30 p.m., just as the plane arrived, he lugged the last load of his kill onto the beach.

What Glenn had carried, the plane couldn't. The pilot had to make two trips to transport the moose back to civilization.

Brothers hunted around the world

After joining a hunting club in the 1970s, Glenn would travel the world to take part in exotic expeditions. Irvin led by example in these type of adventures also.

"He spent about three weeks over in Africa and come back with 80 some trophies," said Glenn. "Cost him over $10,000 just to have the trophies mounted!"

The very next day, the hunters flew back home. Glenn remembered the trip well "I never was so tired in all of my life!" he said. "My chest was so damned sore from that backboard strap across my back. I want to tell you, I was really hurtin'. But we got the job done."

The moose meat filled the Rieke's home freezer and was served to visiting RMPC customers.

* * *

For PR purposes, Irvin couldn't have lived at a worse time.

Early in life, he lived in TW's shadow. His father—deservedly so—got credit for inventing the closure that built the company and for guiding the business's early development. It should be remembered, though, that Irvin—just a teenager at the beginning—was always by TW's side.

Then, almost immediately following TW's death, the younger Rieke boys took center stage. Glenn became a superstar of RMPC. First he placed the company on a national stage. Then he expanded its horizons to exert an international influence. Finally, along came dashing Mahlon, the decorated Marine, who seemed to brighten a room just with his presence. Compared to his handsome, educated brothers, irascible Irvin appeared plain and unexceptional.

That characterization, however, would be wrong. If Irvin faded into the background, it was not a reflection of his talent or accomplishment, but a matter of choice and temperament. In fact, if his brothers shone, at least part of the reason was that Irvin held them up for all to see. By all accounts, he took a fatherly pride in his younger siblings.

Getting the job done

Whenever Glenn told a story of almost inhuman effort, he invariably ended it by saying, "But we got the job done."

After a couple of years on the Ox Bow, Irvin bought a rather large boat which he ran on Holter Lake. To get the boat out of the water each winter, he invented a contraption which slid on wheels along wooden runners right into the water and underneath the craft.

In the early 1940s, Glenn was among a group of men performing the yearly ritual when one of the wheels fell off while the boat hoist was yet underwater. The job came to a standstill until Glenn stripped off his clothes and—despite dangerously low temperatures—dove into the water. After three dives, he had the wheel in place and the work commenced.

What Glenn didn't tell the men was that he had suffered a noticeable decline in motor skills in the frigid water and almost lost consciousness. Once out of the water and as he was being led to a truck to warm up, he began to shake violently. Dr. Covell of Auburn, who was accompanying him, became concerned and rushed his patient back to the ranch house.

Once he was in bed and under a mountain of covers, Glenn realized he was in serious trouble. Thelma and two other women began to rub his limbs to stimulate circulation. This continued for almost an hour. Whenever the women tired or slowed their efforts, Glenn felt as if his life was slipping away. He'd shout at the women, "Faster!"\

By the time Irvin and his crew returned to the house, the crisis had passed. Glenn, though weak, was up and around.

In sharing how close he felt to death, Glenn described his feelings and fears. Still, he ended the story with his credo, saying, "But we got the job done!"

That fact wasn't lost on Glenn. Any discussion of his success is built on a foundation of Irvin's influence. "If ever you saw a man who was self-made, it was Brother Irvin," said Glenn. "He never had much of a formal education, but he was very good at building things."

By way of example, Glenn explained that RMPC couldn't find a commercial press for putting closures in the round side of a barrel. "So Irvin and I designed a press," he said. "Now we've made I don't know how many dozens of those presses and put them in drum plants all over the country." The two brothers comprised equal parts of a problem-solving team. "I knew the technical part, but Irvin had a knack for building things," said Glenn."Why, the two of us worked pretty good together!"

After TW died, Irvin became a father figure both figuratively and literally for Glenn and Mahlon. "We looked up to him," said Glenn. "Nothing deterred him. He loved to live."

Next to TW, Glenn stands tallest in company history. His knack for leadership pulled him toward the corporation board room. To generations of Auburnites, he represented his family's company. When local folk hear "Mr. Rieke," they think of Glenn.

By mere choice alone, his life could have been much different. Having inherited a successful business, Glenn could have bought a Montana ranch and lived a rugged dream.

But Irvin's ranch life on several levels freed Glenn to dedicate himself to business. First, it removed the older brother from every-day decisions—an arena in which conflicts could of occurred. Plus Irvin was cut squarely out of blue-collar cloth: the white collar world never fit him comfortably. As a result, he admired and trusted Glenn's administrative ability. This whole-hearted support from an admired older brother played no small part in Glenn's growth as a leader.

Finally, Irvin's adventurous western life provided an outlet for Glenn's own outdoor yearnings. Several times a year, Glenn left business behind and lost himself in a completely different world.

In a sense, both brothers lived part of their lives through each other. Through Glenn, Irvin was able to succeed at the highest levels of international business. Through Irvin, Glenn was able to taste adventure and unfettered freedom.

Through each other, the brothers fulfilled fantasies of what might have been. Through each other, the brothers were enabled to live their own dreams.

MATTERS of LIFE and DEATH

Chapter Fourteen

The years ending the 1930s and beginning the 1940s produced profound changes for Glenn and Thelma. In large measure those changes came through two new lives and one very significant death.

* * *

About 6 p.m. on the evening of Monday, March 14, 1938, Thelma entered Auburn's Souder Hospital. About 11 p.m., she gave birth to a son, Layden Theodore Rieke. The bouncing baby boy's first name honored Thelma's family, his middle name gave a nod to Grandpa TW and Glenn, his father.

Looking back at those days before computerized medical technology and HMO financing, Thelma shook her head to think how different things were. "They kept you in bed for two weeks!" she said. "I went home with Layden in ten days and then I had help at home. My sister was with me."

Rather than slowing down his parents' busy lives, Layden quickly became part of the bustle. "I was manager of the old country club in Auburn for one year—1938," said Glenn. The golf course, built in the 1920s on the Mott family homestead known as "Green Hurst," used an old farmhouse as its clubhouse. The home was torn down in the 1970s to

This photo shows one of Glenn's first attempts at golf. Over the years, the game would take on added importance to him.

make way for the first modern clubhouse (when that burned in 1995, the present building replaced it).

The contemporary Greenhurst Country Club offers sophisticated dining and entertainment, but that wasn't the case in 1938. "To keep the club solvent, we had some slot machines," said Glenn with a laugh. "As manager, I had to keep those slot machines going."

Once again, Glenn played a leading role in building what Auburnites today consider to be an area institution—Greenhurst's food service. "We served the first meals at the country club," Glenn said. "We had cooks prepare the meals and my wife and I were the waiters. We served chicken dinners on Sundays—there was just one item on the menu."

The new baby rolled with the flow. "We would place Layden in a basket in a corner of the clubhouse," remembered Glenn.

* * *

As the 1930s came to a close, TW finally cut back on his hard-pressing work schedule.

Several factors contributed to his new, less-stressed view of life. His family had grown. The youngest, Mahlon, graduated from Purdue in the spring of 1938 and immediately joined RMPC as a draftsman in the engineering department. The business, though still young, had matured. In 1938 the first serious discussion on possibly giving up the reins of RMPC took place. "Dad offered to sell to a couple of fellows in Auburn for whatever the company would make the next two years," remembered Glenn. "At that time, he was anticipating a return of a little over $75,000 a year. Well, $150,000 was a fortune to that man!" The buyers didn't take the deal, primarily because they couldn't clearly foresee the company's future. Still, just the fact that the company courted interested suitors indicates how

Looking like an advertisement for 1938-era women's golf fashion, Thelma takes a swing.

much it had blossomed.

Most ominously, TW slowed his frantic work pace due to a series of heart attacks which first hit him in 1932.

The impetus to relax produced changes in TW's life that were long overdue. He began to enjoy leisure time. He and Mary did some traveling. His Montana ranch, which combined both of the above, especially became a source of treasured recreation.

The change in lifestyle came as a milestone birthday in TW's life approached. He would turn 60 years old on April 27, 1939.

* * *

On Saturday, April 22, 1939, TW went to his RMPC office in the morning. He returned home, apparently feeling fine. That evening, however, he suffered chest pains.

Doctor Hines paid a house call. His prognosis was not good. TW remained conscious, but struggled for breath. To ease the strain on his body, the physician set up an oxygen tent.

The children were called. "I was at his bed side; he was able to speak right up to the end," said Glenn. "His last words to Irvin and I were: 'Boys, this is it. You carry on!'" A half hour later, at 5:15 a.m. on Sunday, April 23, 1939, Theodore William Rieke died.

TB still had power to scare

Although x-ray detection was becoming widespread and effective chemical treatments would be available before the decade ended, in 1941 tuberculosis still had the power to frighten a community.

"One of the girls in Tri Kappa came down with TB," Thelma recalled. "The doctor insisted everybody that was there the night she was should have a TB test."

Glenn took Thelma to Fort Wayne's Irene Byron Sanitarium. "Out of 37 girls, I was the only one who came up positive!" remembered Thelma. "I went right to the doctor with the report."

Since Thelma had the disease, the doctor asked Glenn to be tested, too. Glenn drove down to Irene Byron. Although the test found no active TB, it did discover a scar on his lung from his bout with the disease as a teenager.

The obituary in the Evening Star the following day ran under a subtitle proclaiming, "Sudden Death of Founder of Auburn Factory Comes as Shock to Friends and Relatives." The article itself stated:

Mr. Rieke was an inventive genius and had obtained 30 United States and several foreign patents .... Until 1930, all business done by the company was domestic, but at the present time shipments are made to nearly every part of the world .... Mr. Rieke was the largest stockholder of the corporation, as well as serving as the vice president. He acted in that capacity in order to give his sons the opportunity of preparing themselves to take over the business, and gave them every advantage to carry on the factory's work. The article noted that the company employed over 100 workers in its peak season.

At 2 p.m. on Tuesday, April 25, a crowd gathered at the Rieke family's 307 North Van Buren home. Rev. H.F. Craven of the First Presbyterian Church conducted the funeral service. Later that afternoon, TW joined his two toddler sons buried in Auburn's Woodlawn Cemetery.

Sixty years after TW's funeral, Glenn still marveled at his father's influence. "He was a very easy-going father, but strict in certain ways," said Glenn. "Being a machinist by trade, everything had to be just right. He hated sloppy work. He always said you could miss by an inch or so—that would be a mistake. But if you missed by a thousandth of inch, that was damn carelessness. It didn't matter how long it took, as long as you got it right. That was his philosophy, his way of life."

Mary and TW posed in the flower-filled living room of their Van Buren Street home for their 35th anniversary. In a little more than three years, TW would suffer a fatal heart attack.

After experiencing disillusionment with religion in his teen years, TW never again stepped inside a church. The people who tried to explain the inventor to the world admitted he wasn't religious. Still, they'd say, TW had a spirituality about him. He held himself to impeccable standards of fairness and honesty. He treated every living soul as his equal. Glenn recalled that his father talked the same to everyone, whether they headed an international corporation or worked on the factory floor. Each person counted with TW, but none too much.

Physically large, TW never felt the need to back down from any man. "Nobody intimidated my Dad," said Glenn. At times his forceful personality made enemies of potential allies. "He was so sure there wasn't anything equal to his product that, if he went into an office and the purchasing agent didn't buy it right away, he'd come out blustering, 'You dumb son-of-a-bitch!'" said Glenn. As a result of TW's brusque manner, some companies remained closed to RMPC entreaties for years. "But on the other hand, some of them appreciated that kind of a salesman," said Glenn. "When Dad died, several of those people traveled from all over the country to attend his funeral."

Speaking in his home office, Glenn pointed to a photograph portrait of TW on the wall. "What he went through, was hard to imagine ....." Glenn's voice trailed away. Though he spoke of his father after a separation spanning six decades, Glenn asked for time to gather his emotions.

"He was a very strong man," the son concluded, "but life threw him too many quirks."

* * *

With TW's death, a load of responsibility landed on Glenn's young shoulders. His first order of business was to act as executor of his father's estate.

The surviving Rieke children divided TW's hobby farms among themselves. Ruth took the farm north of Waterloo, Mahlon assumed responsibility for the farm east of Auburn, Glenn took over the farm with the pond on Hamilton Road. Since he lived much of the year in Montana, Irvin assumed ownership of TW's Arctic Circle Ranch.

In dispensing TW's other personal property, Glenn took possession of his father's Cord 810. "I drove it for three or four years then traded it in for a Chrysler sedan," he said. "I liked it very much—the way it drove and handled. It had front-wheel-drive and modern styling. It's still modern today."

Appreciated by only a few following its botched 1936 debut, the Cord has since grown into a highly coveted classic. In the current collector car market, an 810 can sell for hundreds of thousands of dollars.

After her husband's passing, Mary decided she didn't want to stay in the big Van Buren Street house alone, so Glenn arranged for its sale. The children then built a new home for their mother at 1007 Midway.

Only one property matter remained. TW had bought land on a lake at Crisp Point, Michigan, about 1933. A crew including TW, Irvin, Glenn, Jerry Kelly and Bill Fitzsimmons soon afterward built a cabin on the lot. Glenn occasionally drove up to Crisp Point for fishing vacations. By TW's death, however, the family hadn't used the property in several years. On one of Irvin's visits to Auburn that summer of 1939, Glenn asked his brother if they could fly up to the property in order to evaluate what should be done with it. Bill Fitzsimmons and Jerry Kelly decided to go along for the ride.

The routine trip almost turned into the Rieke brothers' final adventure. "There was an old lake bed in the woods about a mile from camp," remembered Glenn. "There wasn't any trees and it was flat, probably 1,500 feet long and roundish in shape." Irvin, who was flying, decided to set the Reliant down in the lake bed's open area, but he hadn't counted on the effects of a recent rain. "It was slippery as all get out," said Glenn. "When we landed and put the brakes on, the plane kept sliding like she was on water!"

Glenn and Jerry jumped ship. "We both bailed out before we hit the trees," said Glenn laughing. "The plane wasn't going very fast. We hit that slippery stuff and slid right along with the airplane." The Reliant couldn't stop before the bank and got tangled up in trees. Heavy branches crumbled one wing. Luckily, no one was hurt.

A farmer like his father

Glenn kept alive the legacy of TW's love of farming. While Ruth and Mahlon sold the local farms they inherited, Glenn built his into an agricultural business.

"We made the property into a dairy farm and raised 125 registered Guernsey cattle," he said. George Harold Houser served as Glenn's manager of the farm for 42 years. When Houser retired in 1981, Glenn sold the property.

The crew that built the Crisp Point, Michigan cabin (top) consisted of (above, from left): Irvin, Bill Fitzsimmons, Ethie Wimer, Art Wimer, Glenn, Mary, TW, and Jerry Kelly.

The men visited the Rieke cabin, took a few things and boarded the rest up for safe keeping. Then they returned home.

Later, Glenn and Thelma—accompanied by Fred and Tiny Quance—drove with Glenn's homemade house trailer back to Crisp Point. After one last camping visit, they said good-bye to the property. It was sold soon afterward.

* * *

Through their father's careful grooming, the Rieke sons took charge of RMPC responsibilities with barely a ripple of disruption. Irvin, 39, took on the chairmanship of the RMPC board. Glenn, 29, assumed the company's vice presidency and responsibility for the plant's production. The company, though downhearted, continued its market ascent.

Not long after all the commotion ended and Irvin had returned to Montana, Glenn looked up from his desk to see BO Fink enter the office. "He sat down and talked to me for about an hour," Glenn recalled. "I had the feeling he was trying to replace Dad as a counselor." As he left, BO said to Glenn: "Any time you need advice or help, give me a call." Glenn said he used the occasion to thank the foundry founder–the one person most responsible for RMPC's move to Auburn—for all he had done for the Rieke family.

* * *

TW bought one of the first Cord 810s to roll off Auburn Automobile Company assembly lines. In the summer of 1936, he drove it to Montana. In Illiad, near the family's old homestead, the following folks posed by the car for a photo (from left): TW, Hans Lehfeldt, Mahlon, Mary, Lawrence Hoge, Susie Lehfeldt, Thelma and Glenn.

Glenn and Thelma weren't the only Riekes with a growing family. On Monday, June 5, 1939, Irvin and Hilda welcomed a new baby boy. They named him Rex. When the infant was still quite young, Irvin took him along on an important business trip. Young Rex would make a positive impact on the company's fortunes.

At the time, Steve Bennett—the Chicago barrel manufacturer who had bought the first 10,000 Rieke closures almost 20 years earlier—began a campaign to get all Bennett customers to switch to American Flange closures. Most Bennett customers already used American Flange products and Bennett didn't appreciate having to switch his production lines to install RMPC closures for the few customers who preferred TW's design. City Service Oil Company, a big oil barrel user and a fan of Rieke products, remained one of the few hold outs.

The arrow points to damage on the Stinson Reliant's wing in this photo taken shortly after the mishap at Crisp Point.

In an effort to counteract Bennett's efforts, Glenn and Irvin decided to solidify their good standing with City Service. They—with Rex in tow—took a train trip to New Orleans, site of City Service's home offices.

A portly City Service executive named Wellemeyer had been a loyal supporter of RMPC. Over the years, he and the Rieke brothers developed a personal friendship in addition to their business relationship. When Glenn and Irvin announced they would visit New Orleans, Wellemeyer invited them to stay in his home. During their visit, the City Service exec grew attached to young Rex.

When the visit ended, Wellemeyer escorted Glenn and Irvin to the train station. As the big man held baby Rex in his arms, an event that became a treasured memory in RMPC history took place. "Who walks by but Steve Bennett!" said Glenn. Bennett had arrived by train in New Orleans to discuss closures with City Service. Then, before he leaves the train station, he sees Wellemeyer—the only man who could switch City Service away from Rieke closures—playing with Rex Rieke as if he were his own son!

Bennett knew he was beaten. "From that point on, Bennett never said one ill word about us at City Service Oil Company," said Glenn with a chuckle. "He put our closures in their drums without question."

* * *

In 1940, the culmination of a domino-like set of circumstances dropped a fortuitous opportunity in Glenn's path.

The pieces were set in place by EL Cord. For years Cord had upset Old Money men, the American version of royalty which had a virtual stranglehold on stock market wealth. After the young upstart beat these men at their own game, they longed for the day they could push him from power.

That day arrived on August 5, 1937. Suffering from stress and facing attacks from all sides, Cord sold control of his empire to a hostile takeover raider. The next day (and, interestingly, in a Chicago courtroom not far from where the empire sale concluded), Cord agreed to a judgement handed down by the brand new Securities and Exchange Commission. The coordinated timing of the attacks and the fact that Cord should be singled out for stock manipulation abuses led some historians to suspect an orchestrated conspiracy. Whatever the cause, the effect was that Cord's career as a major player on the national financial scene had ended.

Almost immediately, the new managers of Cord's empire shut down Auburn Automobile Company.

Airplane cost more than factory

In October of 1940, RMPC bought an airplane which ranked first on the company's list of assets.

The twin-engine, 12 passenger Lockheed Model 10 rode the crest of aviation technology. It cruised at 225 miles per hour and could reach speeds 50 miles faster. It featured five radios and three transmitters–equipment then the envy of commercial airplanes. Inside, the plane offered its riders the best in comfort. The cabin came equipped with davenports and ice boxes.

If it could talk, the plane would have boasted of being a well-experienced adventurer. According to its previous owners in Cleveland, it had once been used to fly illegal liquor into the country from Canada.

The plane held such high value that the United States government "asked" to buy it (one source says "confiscated" it) for military purposes in August of 1941. Later, equipped with extra fuel tanks, it flew across the Atlantic and was presented to England.

When RMPC owned the plane, its dollar value was greater than the company's West Seventh Street factory.

Disassembling the large, many-tentacled monster required extensive legal wrangling. In tracking down ownership of the old Cord Airport, a South Bend court learned that Cord sold the business to AAC about the time he left town (from that time on, locals referred to it as Auburn Airport). Then, during the reorganization following Cord's ouster, Auburn Central Manufacturing Company of Connersville, Indiana—the large plant where many Auburn Automobile's products were made—took possession of the airport's title. Three years after the reorganization, some old AAC bills still needed to be paid, so the court ordered that the airport—AAC's sole remaining property located in Auburn—be sold.

The order came while RMPC in general and Glenn specifically managed the airfield. Glenn recognized an opportunity and moved quickly. On Saturday, November 23, 1940, the court finalized a deal through which Glenn personally became sole owner of Auburn Airport for $6,000.

Although covering only 43 acres, Cord's original airport had served as a model for other similarly-sized operations. The hangar, which held 15 aircraft, included living quarters and an office for a manager. The field featured two runways; one running northeast to southwest and the other running north-south.

Immediately following his purchase, Glenn enthusiastically set about preserving the airport's assets and improving its shortcomings. The original landing strips measured only 1,800 feet—so tight for putting a plane down that students from other airports landed in Auburn as a final test of their acquired skill. Glenn purchased a nearby farm field and increased the length of the runways to 2,000 feet. He placed cinders on the surface to make the runways better equipped to handle inclement weather. Finally, he partially remodeled the hangar.

Since the airport's earliest days, the influence of Bill

Escape in the *air*

Despite the responsibilities the airport added, Glenn found intangible fulfillment through his close association with aviation. "Flying for me was a way to relax from my other daily chores," he said. "Whenever I could, I'd go to the airport, rev up the old airplane and fly around the wild blue yonder for a while. When I was doing that, I wasn't thinking about anything else."

Thelma rests on a wing of Glenn's recently-acquired Ercoupe. Notice the plane's unique wheel assembly and wide, split tail. The designer of the Ercoupe claimed his airplane was as easy to operate as an automobile. Glenn agreed and believed he was taking part in an aviation revolution. The airplane above bore serial number 100—the very first plane to come off the assembly line.

Fitzsimmons and the flying Rieke brothers had fanned the Auburn community's interest in flying. Glenn's ownership only fueled the fire. Under his characteristic energetic leadership, Auburn Airport came to be recognized as one of the best small airfields in the country. According to Air Facts magazine, DeKalb could count more airplanes per capita than any other county in Indiana in the late 1930s and early 1940s.

Glenn's consuming interest in his side business kept the airport at the cutting edge of aviation. On Saturday, May 10, 1941, Thelma received a Western Union telegraph out of Washington D.C. which stated, "WILL ARRIVE SUNDAY 430 PM STOP WE HOPE, GLENN." A few weeks earlier, Glenn had attended in South Bend a demonstration of a new type of airplane. Dubbed the "Ercoupe," the plane featured foot pedals and an automobile-style steering wheel. The inventor, Fred Weick, claimed the craft's ease of operation would put airplanes on par in popularity with automobiles. Glenn met Weick following the demonstration and flew an Ercoupe. He was hooked. Glenn immediately paid $2,300 for a plane for himself and became a registered Ercoupe dealer. Reo Martin, a local pilot, accompanied Glenn in May when he flew out to pick up his new machine. They returned to Auburn full of hope

Glenn believed strongly in the virtues of the Ercoupe. "I took a fellow who had never been in a plane before for a ride. He took off and landed the Ercoupe without any assistance from me!" he said. "It was completely safe and easy to use. I thought it was just a hell of a nice little two-seater."

The Evening Star played a willing role in helping the new Ercoupe dealer promote his product. .... *aviation authorities say (it) is the greatest step forward in flying since the Wright Brothers historic flight at Kitty Hawk,* gushed the newspaper. .... *all safety features that have been successful in the past have been incorporated into its design, such as all metal construction, giving strength and economical upkeep, tricycle landing gear, making nose* *overs and ground looping impossible, also increasing visibility on the ground and controls all simplified into one wheel, similar to your own auto, so that all travel on the ground or in the air is accomplished by turning (a) steering wheel.*

Glenn's early support for the Ercoupe was apparent in his craft's serial number—100. He had bought the very first vehicle off the assembly line!

Unfortunately, that line would be very short. Although times had changed, the country still trudged under the effects of the Depression. Weick, in Glenn's estimation, came out with the right product at the wrong time. People simply weren't willing to spend money on airplanes in 1941. The Ercoupe factory closed. Glenn followed suit with his dealership after making only two sales.

* * *

Recently-drafted troops march during their May, 1941 bivouac on Auburn Airport grounds. The exact number of men who took part differs in reports of the event, but by all accounts tents covered the property, as can be seen in the photo's background.

Just two weeks after Glenn brought the Ercoupe home, the airport turned green—not from envy, but from army uniforms. About 4,000 soldiers enroute from Camp Custer, Michigan, to Camp Forrest, Tennessee, passed through Auburn.

Although not directly involved in the war then raging in Europe, America concluded it needed to be ready to fight. Shaving the definition of "non-involvement" as closely as he could, President Roosevelt in a December 29, 1940, speech asked the country to become "The Arsenal of Democracy." If fascist regimes didn't hear a warning in those words, they weren't listening.

Private industry slowly answered the call, turning their assembly lines away from the manufacture of civilian products towards churning out the material of war. After the draft was re-instituted in the fall of 1940, military maneuvers began.

Trucks from the Camp Custer unit began delivering equipment at Auburn Airport about 9 a.m. on Tuesday, May 20, 1941. The trucks then returned for the soldiers, who had marched 7 1/2 miles to a pick-up point. Once aboard the trucks, the troops traveled down U.S. 27 to Auburn.

In town, officers split the men into five groups which were dispersed to different sites. The majority, however, camped out in tents at Auburn Airport.

* * *

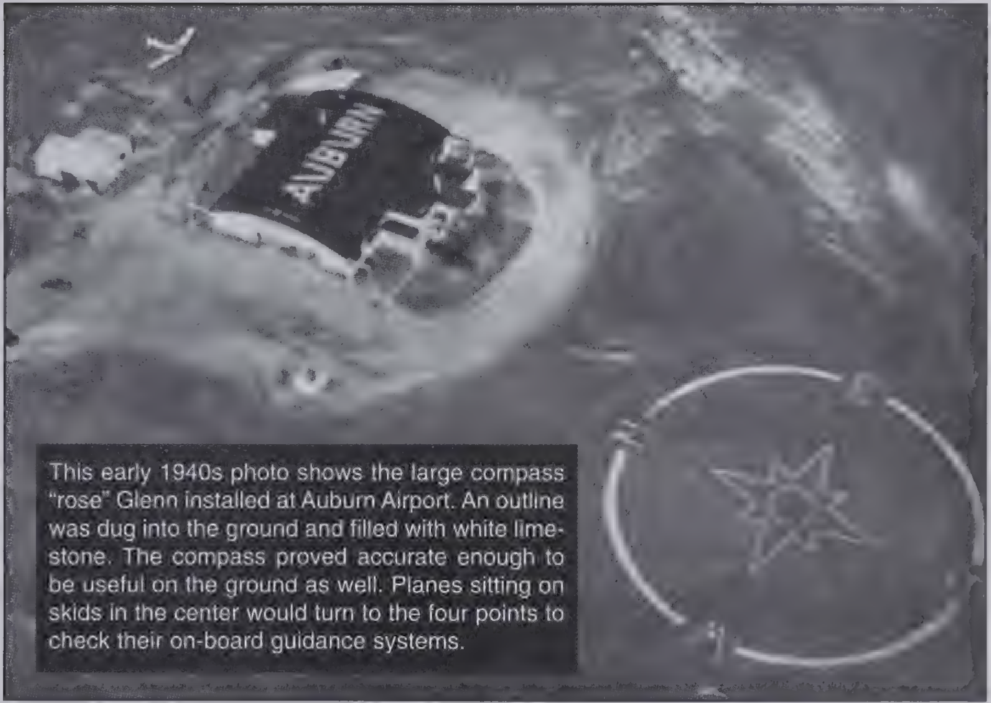
A month after the Army's slumber party, Auburn Airport held a rededication ceremony. On June 29, 1941, from shortly before 9 a.m. until 10:30 a.m., sixty two planes from three states flew in for the festivities. The airport treated the pilots to a ham-and-egg breakfast.

Bill Fitzsimmons presided as toastmaster over the program that followed. Auburn Mayor Lodie Potter and Judge Daniel Link spoke. Boy Scout Troop 165, a descendant of the troop Glenn initiated almost 20 years earlier, raised the flag at 11:30. Afterwards, Paul Eyster, the Angola aviator who issued Glenn's first pilot's license, entertained the crowd with aerial stunts in an old bi-plane.

The ceremony celebrated changes Glenn had made at Auburn Airport. In less than a year of ownership, he had physically and emotionally revitalized the area's small yet classy aviation centerpiece. Visitors to the rededication could see with their own eyes what the news accounts kept reporting:

That Auburn Airport's prestige was clearly on the rise.

* * *



This early 1940s photo shows the large compass "rose" Glenn installed at Auburn Airport. An outline was dug into the ground and filled with white limestone. The compass proved accurate enough to be useful on the ground as well. Planes sitting on skids in the center would turn to the four points to check their on-board guidance systems.

Between the purchase of the Ercoupe and the airport's rededication, Glenn received a thrill ride of another sort.

About 11 p.m. on May 24, 1941, Thelma entered the hospital expecting to give birth at any moment. But by midnight, it appeared as if her labor would be a long struggle. "The nurse told Glenn I probably wouldn't have the baby until the next noon," remembered Thelma, "So she said, 'You might as well go home and take a nap.'" Glenn answered, "If you promise to call me, I'll go." With the nurse's assurance she would let him know of any developments, Glenn went home to bed.

In just a couple of hours, the baby decided it was ready. Activity in the hospital room grew hectic. "About 4 o'clock, the nurse called the doctor and about 4:30 or 5 o'clock, we had another little boy," said Thelma.

That's when Doctor Hines asked, "Where's Glenn?"

Thelma answered, "The nurse was supposed to call him, but she didn't do it." The doctor said, "I guess I'd better be calling him."

After her ordeal, Thelma wasn't in the mood to mince words. "I guess you'd better!" she said.

* * *

While the Riekes celebrated a new life, death remained the world's preoccupation. The same Evening Star that announced TW's passing noted that Britain had strongly warned Hitler to back off his aggressive posturing. Five months later, the German dictator invaded Poland.

America watched Europe and worried. Yet hope remained so strong, it smothered practicality. Most Americans believed the fighting would remain overseas and the nation's boys would remain at home.

As the soldier movement through Auburn Airport indicated, some preparations for war had taken place. As strongly as the public at large believed the country could remain isolated, President Roosevelt was convinced America could not remain neutral. He took steps to help the Allies and get America ready for a fight. Still, feeling the public's pulse, Roosevelt knew he couldn't push too hard.

Eric, left, and Layden made Glenn and Thelma's family complete.

In effect, a tug of war of spirits ensued. Military and top government officials frantically pushed to get the country prepared for war while the American public pulled as hard as they could in the opposite direction. Roosevelt, ever the political pragmatic master, sat in the middle. Knowing the tragic results if he were too lax, he advocated preparation. Knowing the resistance he would meet if he acted to strongly, he snapped the country's reins lightly.

During this period FDR predicted some sharp event would take place, acting as a slap in the face that would awaken the American people to the fact that they could not avoid war.

To his utter dismay, he was exactly right.

WAR

Chapter Fifteen

On Sunday, December 7, 1941, Glenn and Thelma worked outside putting up storm windows on their North Van Buren home. They didn't realize a four-year winter had begun.

The couple finally came inside about 5 p.m. Thelma decided to telephone Mary Brown on some forgotten matter. When the friend mentioned Pearl Harbor, the Riekes didn't know what she was talking about. They soon learned.

Taking off from aircraft carriers in the Pacific, swarms of Japanese planes had surprised the U.S. Navy's Hawaiian base that morning. In the one hour and 50 minute attack, the Japanese sunk five American battleships and damaged three others. The attack destroyed more than 300 U.S. planes as they sat on the ground. Most shocking of all, 2,343 American servicemen died that day.

FDR had proven prescient. America awoke to the war with a start. The country recoiled in horror, then with a united will, grimly set to work. "Bud called from Fort Wayne that night," remembered Thelma. Her brother was stationed with his Air Force corp at the airport then under construction and later named Baer Field (today it's known as Fort Wayne International Airport). "He said we should come pick up his belongings," Glenn added. "He was leaving yet that night for the Pacific Theater!"

Glenn and Thelma drove down to see Bud off. Then, as is often the case in military matters, their hurry-up turned into a wait. "We stayed at Baer Field until 5 a.m.," Thelma said. "The motors on the planes were running. They were just waiting for their orders." But the planes didn't leave Monday morning. Or Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday or Friday. Finally, on the following Saturday, the corp moved out.

If the wait for Bud's good-bye had been painful for Thelma, the separation and lack of good communication with her brothers (Ed soon would be stationed in England) proved almost unbearable. "Bud telegraphed us when they were leaving Seattle," said Thelma. "They were the first boat to go to the New Guinea area without an escort. They zig-zagged all the way there." An unnerving silence followed. "We didn't hear anything from Bud for two months at least," said Thelma. "Dad was furious! There were all kinds of reports of what the Japanese were doing to our boys."

Mahlon Rieke caused Glenn and Thelma similar concerns–but first he caused immeasurable pride. In 1942, he enlisted in the Marine Corps and was sent to the Marine base at Parris Island, South Carolina. While there, Mahlon set a world record for accuracy with an M-1 rifle. Glenn got an unexpected glimpse of his brother about this time. "I was down in Indianapolis one day, when I saw in May's Department Store window, about four or five feet tall, a great, big life-size picture of my brother with a gun on a rifle range!" said Glenn. "The Marine Corp used the poster for recruiting."

Glenn went into the store and asked for an address where he might find information on the poster. When he went home, he wrote to the Marine office asking if—once it had served its purpose—the poster could be sent to him. While Glenn waited for a reply, EJ Wilmot of the Indiana Inspection Bureau in Indianapolis sent the Riekes a newspaper clipping from the Indianapolis Star. The same photo of Mahlon appeared under the title, "Hoosier Sets All-Time Mark." The caption said in part, "The 26-year-old marine scored 328 out of a possible 340, winning the coveted Expert Rifleman medal with 22 points to spare." Several months after first seeing the poster, Glenn was sitting in his Auburn office when two servicemen entered carrying a big box. "I opened it up and here was that poster!" said Glenn. When Mahlon returned from the war, Glenn gave him

Bud (Albert Layden) poses in uniform.

Hoosier Sets All-Time Mar

The U.S. Marines used this photo of Mahlon on recruiting posters distributed across the country. The photo was taken about the time Mahlon set a record for marksmanship.

the poster. It remains a treasured keepsake in Mahlon's family to this day.

After his training ended, Mahlon served with the Second Marine Division. He commanded a company that built and demolished roads and bridges. At Saipan and Okinawa, Mahlon saw action.

With a total of three brothers overseas between them, Glenn and Thelma did what they could for news. "We stayed glued to the radio and newspapers and kept in touch with my Dad, because he would hear things," said Thelma.

While his family fretted, Bud Layden, who served as a carpenter instead of a soldier, found humor in his new surroundings. "He sent a letter with a picture of a native girl," Glenn recalled. "She wasn't wearing anything above the waist except a long strand of pearls." Bud's only comment on the photo went right to the heart of the matter. He wrote, "Don't you think they're pretty pearls, Glenn?" (see box)

* * *

Pearl Harbor caught America completely by surprise. Afterward, the country determined not to let its guard down again.

Even before Japan's daring carrier-based plane attack, aviation experts feared air raids on the US mainland. In fact, six days before Pearl Harbor, on Dec. 1, 1941, FDR's Office of Civilian Defense created the Civil Air Patrol. To be staffed by volunteer civilian pilots, the CAP was charged with searching for enemy crafts, towing targets for army gunners, and delivering war materials. The CAP's duties grew to include those for which it is most known today—searching for lost planes and performing rescue work. The CAP was divided into groups from all 50 states, each known as a "wing."

Bud's wife didn't laugh at joke

When Bud Layden returned from overseas service, Glenn pulled a prank that didn't sit well with the serviceman's wife.

In December of 1941, Bud married a woman named Flora. He left soon afterward for military service and didn't return to the states until the war ended. As a result, he and his wife, though married several years, hadn't spent much time together.

"Right after he got back, we had them up here to our house," said Glenn, picking up the story. "I took that picture of the naked native he sent me and put her in one side of a double folder, and I put a photo of Bud in his uniform over on the other side. Then I set this folder on the mantle."

Bud may have appreciated the joke, but Flora didn't. "Damn near wrecked the marriage!" said Glenn with a laugh.

"When we first got into the war, we didn't know if the fight would end up on our own shores or not," Glenn explained. "So the country decided to band all private flyers and airplanes together in an organization, so they could be used in some fashion if ever needed." Just days after America formally entered the war on Dec. 11, 1941, Glenn led a group of eleven area pilots to volunteer their services to the CAP. The group reads like a cast of characters from this biography: Glenn and Irvin Rieke, Bill Fitzsimmons, Leonard Rathert, and Reo Martin (Harry Dueter, who would soon become infamous at Auburn Airport, was also a CAP volunteer—see box).

The men filled out applications which asked questions about their flight experience and the airplanes they owned. These were sent to CAP's Washington DC headquarters along with the pilots' photographs and fingerprints. A December 30th Evening Star article noted, *If accepted, applicants will be assigned to the flight or squadron where they can be most available or render the greatest service ....* Area folk may have already been hoping their local airport would host a squadron. The newspaper hinted at such when it went on to say, *The Auburn airport has undergone considerable improvement and expansion recently, and it is now shown on all major air route maps. It has been pointed out that the port might prove valuable as an emergency field.*

Airport experiences first crash

On Memorial Day, May 31, 1942, the Auburn Airport hosted its first airplane crash. Luckily the pilot, Harry Deuter, one of the original CAP members, escaped with only a cut on his chin.

Witnesses told a newspaper, "a gust of wind caused the ship to settle just as it crossed telephone wires that border the west side of the field. It pitched down into a wire fence." The two-seat Travelair, estimated to be worth $600, was judged a total loss. The damage to the telephone wires put the Auburn-to-Angola and Fort Wayne-to-Angola circuits out of commission.

Glenn told the newspaper Deuter's crash was the first accident at the field in its 16 years of existence. Fifty eight years after the crash, Glenn chastised Deuter for carelessness and irresponsibility in a 1940s term, calling him "one of Peck's Bad Boys."

The CAP took its job of guarding America's mainland skies seriously. A CAP statement quoted in the article read in part, *We all do know that to have total defense, the skies must be kept free of any possible subversive activity. Certainly no one should be 'upstairs' unless he or she is known as a thoroughly loyal citizen of the United States or its friend. The aviator himself is the first person to recognize the importance of maintaining strict supervision in the skies.* Auburn Airport took its CAP duties seriously as well. Following a government order, Glenn hired security guards to protect the field.

Through the DeKalb County Civil Defense Council, Glenn requested help from the county to pay for the airport guards. This led in early 1942 to an unexpected sequence of events which made it appear Glenn might have to close the airport for the duration of the war. On Feb. 6, 1942, the Evening Star reported that the defense council had decided against seeking financial help for the airport. *The government has ruled that airports must be guarded 24 hours a day or closed, but so far has not requested that the Auburn field be kept open,* the article said. *The defense council decided that no emergency exists at this time and that the expense of maintaining guards at the airport is not justified.*

The article went on to explain how

the airport had provided its own protection to that point. *The owner, Glenn Rieke, has been paying for services of guards since the government ordered such action taken in order to keep the airport open,* the Star reported. *but he told the county council Jan. 30 that the cost to him of continuing this protection would be prohibitive.*

The council sympathized, but no help would be forthcoming. Once again, Glenn proved impervious to obstacles. At a cost to himself of around $3,000 per year, he kept the airport open throughout the war.

In another war-time precaution, the government ruled that any aircraft not equipped with a two-way radio must stop every two hours. Since it sat on lines leading to Chicago, Detroit, Indianapolis and Cleveland, the Auburn Airport became a popular spot to stop. The newfound exposure spread its already sterling reputation around the country.

The local CAP group plunged ahead. They elected Ray Cool of Auburn their "flight leader." Under Cool, area CAP pilots took radio, first aid, navigation, meteorology and fire fighting classes. On Thursdays, they practiced flying in formation.

In the fall of 1942, a Fort Wayne CAP group conducted several practice bombings at Auburn Airport. Accompanied by an observer and armed with paper bags filled with white lime, the pilots dropped their "bombs" on an outline of a submarine drawn on the field. Auburn CAP members took part in the exercise also. The first practice bombing, held on Sunday, October 11, drew about 15 planes. The results, according to later reports, were mixed at best.

On Sunday, November 8, a similar event took place. This time 25 planes took part and the skill level rose as well. The submarine outline didn't stand a chance. The Auburn team of Glenn and Reo Martin shared a top score of 20 points with a Fort Wayne team.

A newspaper report of the event noted, *All the pilots and observers taking part in the maneuvers do so at their own expense, which is considerable for those who must rent planes.*

In 1943, a third bombing exercise took place in Auburn. This time, an entire weekend—June 12 and 13—was required as 60 pilots and cadets took part in activities. A newspaper noted, *Several direct hits were made with paper sacks of flour. The planes strafed the target from an altitude of 200 feet.* A list of the top scoring teams begins, *Lieutenant Rieke, pilot, Lieutenant Cool, bombardier, Auburn, 15 points ...*

By this date the Auburn flyers had become a CAP "squadron." The Indiana wing designated it Squadron 2, indicating it was one of the first such organizations in the state. The group's new title came with a reorganization of its leadership. By popular vote, Ray Smith of Fort Wayne became the squadron's first "commander."

Soon afterward, Fort Wayne formed a second squadron in addition to the one already there, and Smith took its command. The Fort Wayne groups became squadrons 1 and 2; Auburn's reorganized squadron became number 3. The group quickly chose Glenn to assume the title of commander.

An Evening Star article of the time gives a glimpse into some of the squadron's activities. It reported that four high school students had been inducted into the group as "cadets." Through the CAP, the young men would receive 200 hours in flight instruction. The article noted that the squadron hoped to recruit 12 more high schoolers for the program.

The article also described one day

of drills held at Auburn Airport: *The squadron went (through) rough maneuvers during the morning, with two formations of three ships, each practicing landing and take-off formations. Both formations also practiced V-formation maneuvers and patrolled areas 1 and 2 in the northern part of the county. During the afternoon there was a cross-country flight to Marshall, Mich. Next week Squadron 3 will participate in CAP wing maneuvers at Fort Wayne. Planes will leave the Auburn airport at 7:15 a.m. A silver cup will be awarded for the best flight.*

Up until 1943, CAP members fully believed they might be called upon to conduct air patrols along America's coasts. With the country's young men engaged in some of the most horrific fighting in all history, the men at home wanted to do their part to help. But as the war dragged on and it became clear America would not be subjected to air raids, the spirit and pure motives of the CAP pilots dissipated. Glenn remembered later squadron training sessions as lighthearted affairs. "The CAP meeting day was a picnic day for us. It give us the excuse to buy gasoline for our airplanes!" he said.

Never called upon to put training into practical use, the local CAP missed its chance to prove its preparedness. "As far as the war effort was concerned, I don't think the organization done any good," Glenn said looking back. "Other than it helped train a lot of pilots."

Glenn—kneeling in the front row, fifth from right—organized Auburn's Civil Air Patrol group in 1941, just after Pearl Harbor.

* * *

At RMPC, the war meant one long, unending production push.

Even before America officially entered the war, government officials contacted RMPC and asked for help. The commander of Camp Holabird in Baltimore, Maryland, personally visited Auburn. During a meeting in Glenn's office, he asked if the company could develop a closure for the Jerry Can, a 5-gallon, metal, three-handled gas can used by troops. Glenn assured the commander his company could.

Under Glenn's leadership, the company lived up to its word. When RMPC presented the Quarter Master Corps with its design, the government added a second request: Can you manufacture the closures in large numbers?

The question wasn't a simple one. Working for the government meant relinquishing almost all non-government customers—customers RMPC had carefully collected over all its preceding years of business. Yet Glenn never hesitated. This was war. He threw RMPC's full resources into the task.

Despite all-out effort, demand for Jerry can closures stayed ahead of production capability at the Auburn plant. "They give us orders for millions of closure sets, the flanges and plugs," said Glenn. To meet the need, he began to look outside his own factory. "Other plants were looking for war work, so I'd tool them up to make our closures," he explained. "We had plants in Cleveland, Green Bay and St. Louis."

Still later, the War Production Board asked RMPC to equip Middle East steel drum plants with tooling to make Rieke closures. To comply, Glenn had to travel overseas to oversee the start of production in plants in far-flung locations.

The relationship between RMPC and the government grew so close that the company rented an office in Washington DC. RMPC's sales manager worked out of Washington throughout the war.

One incident perfectly illustrated the lengths RMPC went to cooperate with war production. One morning, Glenn was awakened by the telephone. His eyes popped open when the man on the line said, "This is priority number one from the White House." A drum plant in Karochi, India, had been asked to make drums to carry gasoline to Gen. George S. Patton's tank corps in North Africa. The plant had everything it needed to make the drums, but no closures. So the whole operation—barreling facility and fighting men—came to a standstill. "They needed that little closure to complete the job!" said Glenn.

War leaders desperately wanted to rectify the situation. FDR himself issued the order for closures.

Glenn never thought to argue, even though the emergency order imposed an almost impossible logistical challenge. "I told them we'd make the deadline if it took every employee in our plant—and it just about did," he said. "When you get order number one out of Washington DC and the White House, you don't argue about it. You just deliver it!"

RMPC's 150 workers dropped all other orders and went to work. Glenn rolled up his sleeves and pitched in. "Our plant wasn't geared up for that type of production," he said, "but luckily, we had about 40 car-loads of steel on the siding. The steel come in strips, about 8 feet long and about an 1/8 of an inch thick. Each strip weighed maybe 30-40 pounds."

To free up workers to run presses, Glenn and the plant superintendent took over the job of getting raw steel into the plant. "A railroad car pulled alongside the plant and we passed the steel through the windows," he said. For three or four hour stints, Glenn worked in the cold handling steel. Then he'd hustle inside to check on the pace of production and to bolster the spirits of the tired workers.

At 2 a.m. the morning following the phone call, workers pressed the last of the 50,000 sets of closures and placed the final delivery box aboard two semi trucks. The semis sped to a rural railroad crossing near Garrett. Like a secretive, underground operation, the government had arranged for the Capital Limited to stop at this country wayside in the middle of the night. When the train did so, RMPC's two semi trucks waited on either side of the tracks. Boxcar doors flew open amid a blur of activity. A mere seventeen minutes later, the Capital continued on its way.

Glenn could only relay what he heard about the dramatic ending to his company's rush war order, for he didn't accompany the trucks on their midnight rendezvous. "When the last truck left the plant, I laid down on a cot in the office," he said. "I had been up since about 4 o'clock the previous morning."

RMPC employees were well aware of the effect their efforts had on the war. Careful reading of newspaper accounts told them that not long after their large closure order headed overseas, Gen. George S. Patton's tank campaign in North Africa once again moved forward. The Germans fled before the assault.

Feeling an integral part of the war effort, the employees celebrated each of Patton's successes. Glenn said they deserved to feel proud. "Patriotism was running quite high," he noted. "Whenever I asked our employees to do anything, they never questioned it. They would just do it. There were times I asked employees to work 24 hours straight. No problem at all. Everybody put their shoulder to the wheel and got the job done."

To give some idea to the sheer size of the order, consider this: it took five military transport planes to fly the closures from Florida to India.

* * *

On October 10, 1942, Glenn received a letter from The War Department. It read:

To the Men and Women of the Rieke Metal Products Corporation: *This is to inform you that the Army and Navy are conferring upon you the Army-Navy Production Award for your fine achievement in the production of war equipment .... The high and practical patriotism of you men and women of the Rieke Metal Products Corporation is inspiring. Your record will be difficult to surpass, yet the Army and Navy have every confidence that it was made only to be broken.*

Sincerely Yours,

Robert P. Patterson
Under Secretary of War

At 2 p.m. on Thursday, November 19, 1942, Auburn-area folk jammed into the old Court Theatre (located at 120 South Cedar Street, the building was torn down in the 1970s; today, a small gazebo marks where the theater once stood). The backdrop on the stage showed a muscular Uncle Sam before factories belching smoke. In his hand, Sam held a hammer, which he aimed at a sword held on an anvil.

John Smith, the clean-speaking son of the talented cussing farmer who had helped Glenn move telephone poles for the clubhouse cabin nearly 20 years earlier, sang "The Star Spangled Banner." Roy H. Faulkner, a popular former president of Auburn Automobile Company, served as the Master of Ceremonies and introduced honored guests. That list included Col. Wm. B. Johnson, Chief of Engineering Divisions, Holabird Ordnance Motor Base, Baltimore, Maryland, and Lt. R. M. Stocking of the U.S. Navy.

In 1906, the Navy had sought to identify ships and personnel that exceeded its own high standards. That gave birth to the "E" award signifying excellence. The program in Auburn's Court Theatre that 1942 afternoon continued the tradition. After opening remarks, Col. Johnson presented RMPC president Irvin Rieke with the Army-Navy "E" pennant.

In the patriotic 12-page printed program which accompanied the ceremony, witnesses read:

Now America is at War.

RMPC war efforts remembered

Glenn received thanks for RMPC's ability to fill war-time rush orders of closures years after the fact.

In the early 1950s, he traveled to the Bahrain Islands to help solve problems poor quality steel was causing in an RMPC licensee plant. While having a cocktail in the lobby of a ship, a man sitting nearby turned to him and said, "Are you Mr. Glenn? Mr. Glenn Rieke?"

Taken aback, Glenn confirmed he was. In an English accent, the man introduced himself as John McDonald and continued, "Mr. Rieke, I know all about you and your closures. During the world war, I was an expediter for the British government, working out of Washington, DC. Every time we needed closures, I'd call your sales manager and say, 'How soon can we get 50,000 closures?' And he'd say, 'I'll call Mr. Glenn and find out.'

"I never got to talk to 'Mr. Glenn,'" McDonald concluded. "But he always came through for us and gave us what we needed!"

A War that in the will of God may so arouse the peaceable—humane peoples of the world—that they will carry it on to a conclusion that will end all wars.

The task is not an easy one—for this is in truth an all-out war—a war not confined to those on the fighting fronts—but a war reaching down into the highways and byways of America—and taking its toll—in heartaches—sacrifices—sweat—and toil.

With full knowledge of the great responsibility resting on the shoulders of the skilled workers in industry—the Army and Navy now cooperate in honoring these soldiers of production—whose uniform may be their overalls—but who in spirit are flying the high heavens—with our boys over Germany, or crawling side by side with them in the muck of the Solomon Islands.

The War has come to Auburn.

Irvin, addressing RMPC employees, wrote a letter in response to the high award. It also appeared in the program and read:

It is with great humility and sincere appreciation, I, as President of this Company accept in you name, the Symbolic "E" for excellent performance."

I cannot help but feel, however, that nothing I can say—can do anything but supplement the feeling that each of you and the members of your family must feel in your hearts—in the fact that you have played your part in securing this great honor .....

I pass this pennant on to you—so it may fly above our plant as a constant inspiration to greater effort and understanding in the days that lie ahead.

Later that day, with the "E" pennant appearing high on a RMPC flagpole, a squadron of Navy jets flew over the factory in a symbolic gesture of honor and appreciation.

As was typical of government war transactions at the time, no purchase order or other paper officially recorded terms of the deal resulting from that early-morning telephone call. The only contract was the word of the two men taking part. Glenn attributed the informality to simple practicality: the nation needed the closures and his company could supply them.

RMPC would be further asked to display patriotism in waiting for payment for the rush order. It arrived more than a year later.

* * *

Altogether, RMPC produced 145 million sets of Jerry can closures during World War II. Glenn estimated that 50 to 60 million of those sets were made in the company's home Auburn factory.

Throughout the war, Glenn served as RMPC's vice president of manufacturing. To him fell the duty of juggling logistics. He faced an almost endless need to boost production against three recurrent challenges: procuring raw material, hiring personnel, and finding —more accurately, developing—machinery that was up to the challenge.

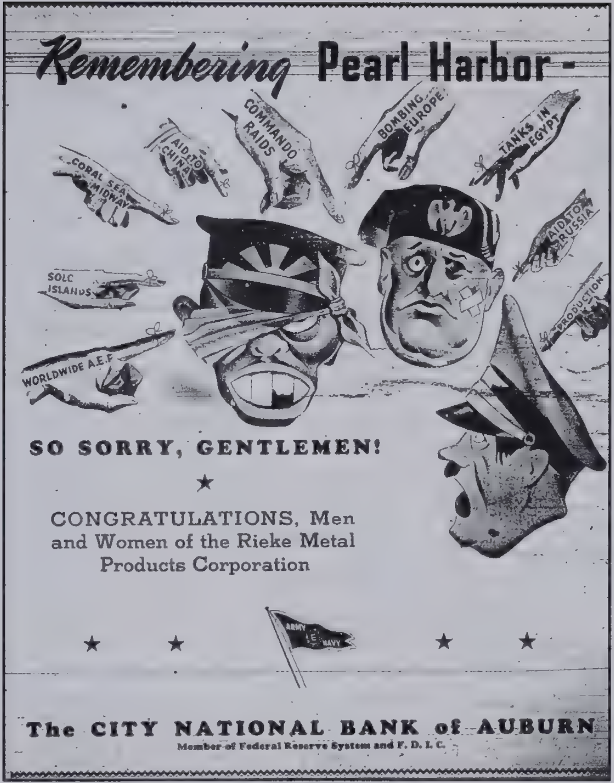
Auburn jammed the Court Theatre on Nov. 19, 1942, when Rieke Metal Products Corporation was awarded the Army-Navy "E" award. The coveted award signified excellence and was given to individuals and groups that went beyond the call of duty. RMPC was one of the first Indiana businesses to receive the recognition.

Raw material was the least of Glenn's worries. The War Production Board regulated the flow of strip steel and RMPC closures ranked high on the board's priority list. In other words, if the nation needed closures, the steel would be there. Statistics of the stuff provide a glimpse into the magnitude of RMPC's war-time work. Each set of Jerry can closures took about one pound of steel. By late 1942, the company was using 3,000 tons of steel a month. Throughout the war, RMPC was the largest user of strip steel in the state of Indiana.

To run such high numbers, Glenn needed to beef up his workforce. With most able-bodied American men overseas in active military duty, that wouldn't be easy. So Glenn tapped farmers willing to work outside their fields and, like many other American businesses, RMPC for the first time began to hire women.

Still the call for workers could not be answered. The demand in northeast Indiana grew so large that a mini migration took place. Poor residents of the eastern mountains poured into the area. Growing up before the TVA helped improve lives, many of these workers were uneducated and unaccustomed to the regiments of employment in a bustling company. Glenn grew frustrated as the quality and temperament of his workforce changed. He firmly believed that personnel added during the war led to labor problems which the company experienced after the fighting ended. At the time, though, Glenn felt his hands were tied. "I had to hire anybody with a warm body!" he said.

By the end of 1942, RMPC employed almost 300 workers. Organized into three, 8-hour swing shifts, they kept the factory humming 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Through a rotation system, each employee worked Monday through Saturday. Then, every third week, he or



Remembering **Pearl Harbor -**

SO SORRY, GENTLEMEN!

★

CONGRATULATIONS, Men and Women of the Rieke Metal Products Corporation

★ ★ ★ ★

The CITY NATIONAL BANK of AUBURN
Member of Federal Reserve System and F. D. I. C.

Newspaper celebrated "E" Award

The Evening Star which appeared on the day RMPC received its "E" award swelled to three times the paper's normal size. The special issue included messages and full-page ads offering RMPC and the Riekes congratulations.

Ralph A. Bard, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, wrote: *Auburn may well be proud of the high honor which you men and women have conferred upon your company by winning the Army-Navy "E" award. Congratulations!*

Donald M. Nelson, Chairman of the War Productions Board, and R.S. Pruitt, former vice president of the Cord Corporation, were listed among "celebrity" congratulators.

Organizations and businesses that paid for ads included the Auburn City administration and GL Foley Pattern Company and employees. City National Bank of Auburn's full page ad featured caricatures of Tojo, Mussolini and Hitler. "It read in part, "So sorry, Gentlemen! (see illustration)"

RMPC also bought a full-page ad. It expressed appreciation for the honor, but noted, "We realize that, while we were selected for the "E" award, our fellow manufacturers are working with the same vigor and spirit."

she received one day off during the week in exchange for working on Sunday.

In a sense, both raw material and personnel were outside Glenn's control. He had to take what he could get. In the matter of machinery, however, he found almost limitless possibilities, bounded only by his imagination.

When the war began, RMPC still operated under a TW-style management of machinery. In fact, the company's only press at the time was the Bliss Knuckle Joint Coining Press Glenn helped rescue.

After TW modified and installed the Bliss press, Auburn citizens lived with a constant reminder that RMPC was at work. "You could hear it all over town.," said Glenn, with a laugh. "When that knuckle joint gear would come down, it had a ring to it!"

Glenn and Thelma heard the ringing in their North Van Buren home. "I'd lay in bed during the war, listening to that press," Glenn remembered. "If the darn thing stopped, I'd get out of bed and go find out what the hell was wrong. We had to keep running day and night!"

But as the government kept demanding for more and more closures, Glenn realized the Bliss press simply couldn't keep up. "So we went out and bought new presses," said Glenn. "We could charge it off on the government jobs." When the war ended, RMPC had three brand new 1,000-ton presses, each worth $100,000.

The change in machinery significantly changed the company's outlook. "Before the war, Dad bought most of our machinery from used machinery places. We didn't buy new pieces. We couldn't afford it," Glenn explained. "But during the war, in order to make these heavy runs, we bought better and bigger equipment. It improved the manufacturing capacity in our plant considerably. In this respect, the war work proved an asset to RMPC. For the first time in its history, it had modern equipment!"

A new era was dawning. Glenn and Irvin continued their father's legacy of ingeniously modifying machinery to do their bidding, but no longer were they scrambling to keep old machinery in working order. Now they had control. They were adapting new machinery of their choosing, to–in effect–invent new systems of manufacture.

As Glenn saw it, the manual age had ended and a mechanical age begun. It was an era which would give his career both direction and fulfillment.

Auburn Rubber wins own award

RMPC's war effort brought success to another Auburn Company.

The Jerry can closure Glenn helped design included a rubber gasket. Soon after accepting the government's request to begin production, Glenn called Auburn Rubber Company, RMPC's neighbor just across Seventh Street. One of the nation's largest toy manufacturers at the time, Auburn Rubber had virtually closed its doors because rubber, its main raw material, had been so severely rationed for war use.

"We've got a big job here," Glenn remembered telling Auburn Rubber officials. Those six short words grew into a major understatement. Before the war ended, Auburn Rubber Company produced 200 million sets of gaskets to go with Rieke closures!

For its efforts, Auburn Rubber Company won its own "E" award about six months after RMPC received the honor.

Old press helped war effort,

Even an old, forgotten RMPC press helped the war effort.

When the Bliss press first arrived, the company bid its old press goodbye. Covered with patches, braces and welds, the big heavy machine had outlived its usefulness.

TW found a creative way to make the monster disappear. "Dad dug a hole in the center of the street, dropped the old press in and covered it over," said Glenn. At the time–about 1924–Fifteenth Street was not paved.

When the war scrap metal drives began scouring town for old metal, someone at RMPC remembered the buried press. "So, about 1941, they dug it up, took it out and turned it into the scrap drive!" said Glenn.

THE HOME FRONT

Chapter Sixteen

As World War II caused RMPC to pack on muscle, Glenn and Thelma continually slimmed their personal lifestyle.

As elsewhere in the country, DeKalb County folks sacrificed personal needs in order to aid American soldiers overseas. The home front efforts could be divided into three categories; physical exertion, material collection and resource reduction.

Home-bound Americans physically worked hard for the war. Community leaders quickened their pace of organization, serving on countless new committees and war-related groups. To fill gaps left by draftees, many women who had never before been employed entered the work force. Senior citizens volunteered their time for everything from wrapping bandages to writing letters to soldiers. Even children got involved; DeKalb young people, for example, collected milkweed pods which were made into life preservers.

To make up for a shortage of raw material, common props of every-day American life were collected and recycled into war goods. Scrap metal drives collected pots, pans, old cars and tractors.

Finally, as many consumer goods disappeared from county store shelves, local folk learned to cut back on consumption–or to simply do without. The items that did remain for sale could only be bought with ration coupons.

Rationing hit transportation especially hard. Due to the scarcity of gasoline coupons, cars and trucks virtually ran only for business or emergencies. Manufacturers quit making new tires for civilian use, which meant used tires quickly became prized commodities.

Life on the home front in general took place at the end of a short leash.

* * *

Options to war restrictions were limited. Area folk either learned to live within the narrow confines or creatively found new solutions to old problems.

The Riekes did both. The family made do without luxuries such as camera film. "When Layden was born, we took lots and lots of pictures of him," Thelma remembered. "When Eric came along at the beginning of the war, you couldn't get film. Compared to the number we have of Layden, we have very few pictures of Eric!"

With the nation's production resources geared toward war, items for play fell off manufacturers' priority list. "During the war, you couldn't buy toys for the kids," said Glenn. Fortunately, the Rieke family didn't find that particular hurdle difficult to clear. Harkening back to his own childhood of homemade contraptions, Glenn relied on the resources at hand to provide the boys with toys. "I made a wagon for them," Glenn said, referring to a photo. "I got the wheels off an old baby carriage."

Layden and Eric show off the wagon their father made one Christmas during World War II.

The war restriction that hit the Riekes hardest was gas rationing and the limits it placed on their freewheeling, lifestyle. But it wouldn't slow them down for long.

Using the family tradition of innovation, Glenn discovered ways around the problem. "We were driving through Fort Wayne one day and saw in a junk yard an automobile," Glenn said. "It was a 1918 Detroit Electric car. It looked brand new, so we stopped to see what it was all about." The junk yard manager told Glenn and Irvin an elderly woman had turned the car in during a scrap drive. Previously, the vehicle sat in a garage, unused for years. Sounding a familiar theme, the Rieke brothers asked, "What do you want for it?" For $50, they bought their next fix-up project.

The car harkened back to early automobile days. During that period, electricity challenged gasoline as a fuel of choice. When inventors finally decided fossil fuel provided more boost than batteries, electric cars quickly lost ground and disappeared. With the ration on gasoline, however, electricity proved to be the perfect fuel. To tap its power, Glenn and Irvin simply needed to put the old Detroit back in working order.

The challenge proved unusually easy. "We called a battery company down in Cincinnati and they furnished a set of batteries for us for $350," said Glenn. "We put new batteries in the car and boy, she run like a top!" Glenn set up a recharging station at the factory. "During the day while we was working, I was recharging my batteries!" he said.

Old, cracked tires—probably the car's original set—threatened to put the brakes on Glenn's new-found mobility. But, once again, lady luck steered clear of a pothole. "We called Montgomery Ward Company in Chicago to see if they had any tires for that 25-year-old car," Glenn recalled. "They made a search and found four tires that size in a warehouse. So they sent them to us—brand new tires, the old clincher-type rims."

The Detroit Electric car allowed the Rieke family to keep on the move despite war-time rationing. In this April, 1945 photo, a family friend–Helen Baldwin–peeks out of the window at right. Glenn can be seen in the background, Thelma's image can be seen through the left, rear window, and the boys take a seat on the running board.

With new batteries and tires, the car provided Glenn a unique lease on freedom which lasted throughout the war. "We could just thumb our nose at the gas station as we went by," he remembered. "We didn't need (gas) stamps like everyone else!"

For about-town travel, the old Detroit proved invaluable. Glenn used it to take Layden to kindergarten and Thelma to the store. Often the car provided his ride to the office each morning.

Ultimately, the movement the electric car provided proved limited. "The longest trip I ever took with it was to our farm and back," Glenn said. "That was about 25 miles, round trip. At its peak, the car would go only 25 miles an hour, but after the trip to the farm it crawled the last half mile because the battery was getting low."

After the war ended, Glenn sold the antique electric to a car collector. He never learned what happened to his old set of wheels, but he hoped fate treated it kindly and that it found a permanent home in a museum.

* * *

The use of motorized scooters became a mini-fad in Auburn during the war. "Bill Fitzsimmons had one, I had one, Irvin and Hilda both had one," said Glenn. Miserly on gas, the little two-wheelers replaced cars for doing small errands around town. Of course, running in traffic on city streets made the open-air vehicles more dangerous for their drivers—a lesson Glenn learned first hand.

"The office had some mail they wanted to get to the Post Office when it used to be on Cedar Street, so I took a handful and got on my scooter," Glenn recalled. "Where Seventh Street crossed Van Buren, there was a chuck hole in the road. I was going along with one hand on the handle bar and holding these letters, not paying any attention when I hit that hole. The front wheel stopped and I went over top of the scooter. I stopped sliding underneath a parked car."

Glenn picked himself up and completed his errand. But, as the day wore on, he found he couldn't shake the effects of the accident. "We were having trouble with one of the big presses in the plant and I had to go up to the machine shop on the second floor," he said. "A big, electric motor had burned out. Our electrician rewired it, put it back in the press and got it running that night." Despite success fixing the motor, the overtime work felt endless to Glenn. "I got working and my shoulder was hurting quite badly. I couldn't use the arm at all!" he said. After that aching long day, Glenn visited the doctor. That's how he learned he had broken his collar bone and would spend the next several weeks in a sling.

The fall hurt Glenn's shoulder, but the attitude of his co-workers toward the accident caused his ribs to ache. In the days that followed, Glenn endured quite a bit of ribbing for his scooter-riding skills.

* * *

A more serious broken collarbone pained the Rieke family just before Christmas of 1944.

On Christmas Eve day, the family took their traditional trip to LaFayette to visit Thelma's clan. Glenn kept his attention on Highway 25's slightly slippery, rounded curves around Logansport while Thelma sat on the front seat beside him. In the back seat, Layden and Eric—who was wearing a superhero's flying suit and boots—dozed.

The family's big Chrysler New Yorker sported an unusual feature: both sets of doors opened near the center of the vehicle which meant the front doors swung toward the front and the rear doors swung backward.

Glenn models the sling he had to wear after his motor scooter mishap.

As the car rounded a particularly sweeping curve while traveling about 55 miles per hour, Glenn heard what sounded like the crack of a rifle. He turned and saw an opening where the right, rear door had been! The door had slipped opened and, due to its unique design, caught the wind like a sail. It shot backwards, breaking its hinges.

Damage to the car quickly became a minor concern. Glenn couldn't find Eric!

Later, the family decided the three-year-old must have been holding onto the door handle. When the door opened, Eric's little body became a bullet in the loaded rifle. Glenn would later find his son's boots and socks on the car floor—pulled off by the force of the opening door!

In the moments immediately following the accident, Glenn lived a father's worst fears. "I looked in the rear view mirror and saw Eric rolling on the gravel berm," said Glenn. "I stopped the car and run back and picked him up. His face was covered with blood! His body was just like a dish rag."

As Glenn retraced his steps holding his injured son, another car came around the corner. Glenn waved the vehicle down and asked the driver, a man named Kelly, for help in getting Eric to the nearest hospital. Kelly jumped in the driver's seat of the Rieke car while his wife followed in the Kelly's car. During those long 10 miles, Glenn sat in the back seat holding his son's limp body. He couldn't tell if the boy had a pulse or not. His mind ran wild.

Trip compounds Mother's anxiety

A year before Eric's accident, Thelma received a dose of Mother's anxiety–albeit in a much diluted form.

"We took our first big trip to California when Eric was just 2 1/2," Thelma said. " I didn't think I would be able to do stay away from the kids that long!"

Before air travel made travel time minimal, before cell phones and pagers made communication easy and instantaneous, separation from home felt complete.

"We went by train, two nights and a day one-way," said Thelma as if she could still hear the click of the tracks. The entire trip took two weeks.

Suddenly, Glenn and Thelma received a frightening, but good omen. "We had just about gotten to Logansport when Eric jerked in my arms and let out a scream," said Glenn. "It was a welcome sign!"

"I don't remember the incident at all," Eric said, listening to his father tell the story 55 years after the mishap. "I'm kind of glad!"

At Logansport's Catholic Hospital, a doctor cleaned Eric's wounds. The gravel road had scraped off a sizeable patch of scalp. The physician stitched it back in place.

Despite the trauma of the accident, the doctor determined Eric's injuries were not life threatening and released him. Shaken, the family continued the short distance to Thelma's folks' farm. They stuck with their original plan because they needed a night's rest. Besides, they were bringing the Christmas turkey.

Then, the next morning before dinner, they started back home. It was a long trip. "Every time you'd touch the kid, he'd scream," said Glenn. "We didn't know what was wrong."

As soon as they reached Auburn, Glenn and Thelma called Dr. Hines. He came to the house and examined Eric. That's when the family learned they had another broken collarbone to deal with.

Eric's memory picked up the story when it came time to remove the bandages covering his head. "They told me at dinner that the doctor was coming," said Eric. "I was the happiest boy around!" A little later that night, the door bell rang "I screamed at the top of my lungs," said Eric. But the boy fell silent when a man other than the doctor entered. The door bell rang again. Another scream. Another disappointment.

"What they didn't tell me was that Dad was having a poker game that night," Eric said with a laugh. "The doctor was one of the poker players, but he was the last one to show up. Every time that door bell rang, I would scream. They were getting a little mad at me by the end of the evening!"

* * *

With two growing boys and a family business that rarely acknowledged the line between Glenn's professional and personal lives, the Rieke's found space at their 1151 North Van Buren Street home evaporating.

"We were hanging out at the rafters!" said Thelma. "We only had two bedrooms. The boys were in one room and I had a house girl living with us part of the time. When the company's New York salesman, Joe Killian, came to town, he would stay with us. We decided we needed more space."

They found a delightful option just past Auburn's southern limit. There, a few yards east of State Road 427, sat an old colonial home with southern-style, Greek-revival pillars. The century-old house, though, wasn't the whole prize. The home and assorted farm buildings sat surrounded by 103 acres of wooded and cultivated land. A tributary of Cedar Creek flowed through the property, complete with an old dam, water wheel and 21-acre lake. Dubbed Cedar Creek Valley Farm, the property was perfect for an active, outdoor-loving family like the Riekes!

If that wasn't enough, the Riekes could assume ownership of Cedar Creek Valley Farm on advantageous terms. Technically, the farm wasn't for sale, but Glenn over the years had built a relationship with its owner. He knew that Harry Kreamelmeyer, a descendant of the family that had owned the farm since its days as a stagecoach stop, was ready to retire. Since Harry and his wife Mary were looking for a place in town, Glenn offered a swap: the North Van Buren Street home for the farm.

The Kreamelmeyers happily agreed!

Layden and Eric knew what their father meant when he mentioned "the farm." They had been frequent visitors to the Kreamelmeyer place and knew it was home to a young English Shepherd pup named "Lady." Harry had trained Lady to herd cattle into the big barn from a pasture on the other side of State Road 427. The task required chasing the cows underneath a bridge on the highway. Needless to say, Lady made quite an impression on the Rieke boys.

Glenn broke the news of the family's impending relocation by asking Eric and Layden, "Do you want to move from the city to the farm?" Their answer surprised him. "All we asked was if the puppy would be there," remembered Eric. "And when we moved, the puppy was there!"

The move took place in April of 1945. Across the ocean, history's bloodiest war ground toward a successful close for America. On the home front, the leash of restrictions loosened. With a sense of relief and new-found elbow room on several levels, it was a happy time for the Riekes.

The good years would not end soon. Cedar Creek Valley Farm remained in the Rieke family the next 42 years. It was, and still is, in their vernacular "the home place."

* * *

Glenn found pure joy in the large Cedar Creek Valley property. A perfect counterpoint to life in the corporate world, it allowed him to indulge his yearning for the outdoors. He could build and plant and cut and clear and raze and renovate to his heart's content. The property offered endless possibilities.

An aerial view of Cedar Creek Valley Farm shows the body of water by which the property got its name in the lower left. State Road 427 appears as a white band across the bottom.

Almost immediately after the move, Glenn began to assemble a virtual zoo. Conventional Indiana farm animals such as horses and chickens soon were joined by rabbits, ducks, geese, wild turkeys, colorful peacocks and silver, gold and ring-neck pheasants. The menagerie provided enjoyment, sustenance, and enough unpredictable events to fuel a new generation of stories.

The property also allowed Glenn to express his creativity through unusual construction projects. The very first year his family lived on the property, he added a caretaker's cabin in a way that wasn't quite conventional "We wanted a tenant on the farm so we bought a building that sat in the small triangle of ground where County Road 11-A branches off State Road 427 and heads toward 69," said Glenn. Where others saw an old filling station, Glenn saw a perfect addition to his farm. He hired Rollie Muhn to jack the building up, put dollies underneath it, and roll it down the highway to its new home. "I'll never forget when Dad moved it," said Eric, laughing. "State Road 427 was the main road between Indianapolis and Flint, Michigan, at the time. All the semis had to take back gravel roads!"

With the tenant house in place, all Glenn needed was a tenant. He didn't have to look far. "The first tenant was Harry and Mary Kreamelmeyer, the couple Dad bought the farm from!" said Eric. It turned out Harry didn't like retirement and living in town as much as he imagined.

* * *

Living on the farm, Layden and Eric found small boys' dreams do come true. Just seven and four years old at the time of the move, the boys grew up roaming the woods and following Cedar Creek. Without a doubt, said Eric, the farm was the perfect setting for boyhood.

Of course, even ideal boyhood involves a few bumps and scrapes.

"At age nine or ten, I went out and saddled a horse to ride," said Eric. "The horse was smarter than me and as I was cinching the belt, I didn't get him tight in the belly. When we got out to the pasture, he knew he had me. He let his air out. I ended up underneath!" Eric decided he couldn't return to the stable riding the belly of the horse. "So I just let go," he said. "I rolled over and over!"

Another time, Eric experimented with fire in a dry cornfield. The results were predictable. "The wind was blowing and it got away from me," he recalled. "I was able to get it out, but talk about your heart beating!"

Layden recalled an event from when he was 11 or 12 years old. He was working on a Boy Scout merit badge which required him to camp out over night. Eric decided he would rough it with his older brother.

Then the rain started.

Eric headed for the house. Layden, determined to get his badge, stubbornly stuck it out.

Glenn heard the rain—it was coming down in buckets—and he heard Eric come inside. Worried that Layden might be frightened outside alone, Glenn trudged through the rain to the tiny camp. The tent, too, turned out to be boy-sized and at least a portion of Glenn spent a miserable night exposed to the rain and mud.

Eric and Lady get off to shaky start

Although they eventually became fast friends, little Eric and Lady–the dog the Riekes inherited with their farm–didn't start off that way.

"Lady didn't like people eating her food," explained Eric. As a four-year-old, he was playing near the shepherd as she was eating. When the boy stuck his head close to the pan of food, the dog nipped him.

The resulting wound required medical attention. "We were ready to go church," Eric said of that Sunday morning. "I don't think we made it!"

While admiring his father's sacrifice to parenthood, Layden had to laugh. "The next morning, Dad walked in the house like a drowned rat. Since I spent all night in the tent, I was fine!"

Oh, by the way, Layden earned his badge.

* * *

As might be expected, the boys managed to get into their share of trouble. One such example upset their parents at the time, but later they could look back at it and laugh.

About 7 a.m. one Christmas morning, Glenn and Thelma came downstairs just as their sons were heading upstairs. "They were tired," Glenn explained with a chuckle.

The parents were puzzled until they saw the area around the tree. "Every package was opened!" said Glenn. "Packaging was scattered all over the floor."

"At that time, my family would draw names for gifts," Thelma added. "Of course, those gifts came by mail

Farm figured prominently in local history

Soon after the Rieke family moved to Cedar Creek Valley Farm, an old man named Knott paid a visit. He told Glenn fascinating stories from the property's long history.

Knott said the house had been built around 1840 as a stagecoach inn. Back when State Road 427 was known as Coldwater Trail, inns could be found every 20-25 miles. If starting in Fort Wayne, that meant stagecoach riders would stop in what is now Auburn, Angola, and, finally, Coldwater, Michigan. At Coldwater, stages caught the Chicago Pike, which ran between Chicago and Detroit.

Knott showed Glenn a local history book. It told the entire story of the inn, including a vignette about an early innkeeper who made this rule: Indians and white people alike had to leave their firearms and knives outside. The book also told of a grist mill run by water power that used to sit southeast of the inn.

Originally, the inn set a few feet from the road. Only a year or two before the Riekes moved to the farm, the state paved 427. During this construction, the Kreamelmeyers asked that the house be moved back from the roadway. According to Thelma, the building was moved the distance of its length to the east, and the distance of its width to the south.

Unfortunately, many mementos and details of the past were needlessly lost. When Glenn first investigated his new property, he found dozens of old, wooden pails stored in the attic of the house. The buckets had probably been used to collect maple sap for syrup back in pioneer days. Glenn regretfully reported that he simply threw the buckets away.

While this book was being prepared, Glenn contacted Knott's daughter, Frieda. She made a search for the local history book her father referred to, but failed to find it.

and I didn't know who sent what!"

Thelma had to improvise when she wrote individual notes to her family,. She avoided any embarrassing slips by simply thanking each relative for "the gift."

* * *

After the Riekes moved to Cedar Creek Valley Farm, Thelma's relatives couldn't help having a little fun at her expense.

"I had my fill of farming growing up," Thelma explained. "I wasn't going back. Then we moved to the farm. My Dad really thought that was funny!"

During the time the Riekes lived on Cedar Creek Valley Farm, Thelma also did bookkeeping chores for the dairy farm north of Waterloo which TW had willed to Ruth. "I'd be talking about this field of wheat and that field of corn," said Thelma laughing. "My Dad said, 'I bet you never thought you'd talk about stuff like that, did you?'"

Despite any initial reluctance, Thelma found her stride at Cedar Creek Valley Farm. Only one major problem

Coldwater Trail had rough beginning

During stagecoach days, Coldwater Trail became a "corduroy road." To make the roadway passable in wet weather, thousands of trees were chopped down, laid side by side, and covered with dirt. It's easy to imagine the bumpy ride that resulted when the small cushion of dirt washed away. Although they contributed to the shamefully quick disappearance of America's virgin woodlands, corduroy roads provided a touch of pioneer beauty. The trees forming the road bed often sprouted new life at both ends. After decades, this resulted in beautiful, tree-lined country roads.

Glenn remembered that when his family first moved to Auburn in 1923, a portion of State Road 427 just south of Auburn was still a corduroy road. By the time Thelma arrived in 1932, a gravel roadway had been installed.

stood in the way of her happiness. "At first, I had to run my legs off!" she explained. Trying to keep track of the boys as they roamed the woods, Thelma invariably heard the phone ring back in the house. She began to feel more like a marathon competitor than a mother.

Once again, the family solved the problem with a unique answer. "About that time, a tornado hit our dairy farm," said Thelma. "It tore down an old barn that had once been a church. The building still had a bell in it. We confiscated the bell and put it on the roof of our back porch at the farm!" Thelma devised a system which transferred the burden of the farm's expanse to young legs. "From then on, it was a standing order that whoever was outside when the bell rang had to report immediately," she explained. "Whoever wasn't wanted could go back where they were, but everybody had to report!" Thelma laughed at the memory. "That sure saved a lot of running for me!"

Although at times the ringing bell announced unpleasantness in a young boy's life—such as neglected chores that needed to be done—like Pavlov's dogs the boys mainly associated the cheery peals with pleasure. The bell could bring them running from various hiding places when Thelma rang for dinner time.

* * *

Birds kept freezer full

The Riekes used birds raised on their farm to keep their food freezer full.

"We put about 50 pheasants in our freezer every year," said Glenn. "At that time we didn't have any restaurants to speak of in Auburn, so when I had customers in from out of town, they'd usually stay at our house. Mom would prepare a gourmet meal of duck and pheasant!"

Thelma could have opened a restaurant of her own with all the wild game Glenn provided. During his annual hunting trips to Montana, Glenn would return with an entire smorgasbord. "We'd bring back elk meat, deer meat, antelope and have that meat in our freezer to

The farm also provided an outlet for the Riekes' love of blood sports.

Hunting never stopped for the newest member of the family, Lady. "This was back in the days when there were a lot of animals," said Eric. "We had a lot of snakes—garter snakes, blue racers. That dog would find them, grab them in the middle, and just shake them!"

At night, Lady patrolled the grounds like a prison guard. "Practically every night during the summer, she'd catch a possum or raccoon or something," Eric said. Glenn piped in,. "She'd kill it and lay it on the back steps for us. She was proud and wanted us to see it." One summer the family counted 47 coons and 15 opossums left on their back porch.

Often, Lady wanted to share the fun of the hunt with her family, which led to some sleepless nights. "She would tree something right outside our bedroom," said Glenn. "She'd bark until I came out and shot the animal."

One night in 1954, Glenn got more adventure than he bargained for. "We were putting the swimming pool in the lower yard and had a couple old fruit trees down there," he said, setting the scene. "The whole side of the hill was a wild blackberry patch. About 2 o'clock in the morning, Lady started howling. There wasn't any sleeping as long as she was barking, so I decided to go out. It was dark and had been raining. I was in my bare feet, wearing just pajama trunks. I started towards the barking, through the blackberry patch. Just got wetter than the devil!"

Glenn found Lady standing with her front legs against a tree trunk, looking up. "The branches were quite low. I had to go about 10 feet underneath," he said. "So I crawl under there with my little .22 revolver." What Glenn saw when he got under the tree gave him a start. "I look up and, my god, I thought she had treed a bear!" he said. "It was a great big bundle of hair in the crotch of a branch, about six feet above us." With a second look, Glenn realized the big fur ball was actually two separate—yet sizeable—raccoons.

The adventure was just beginning. "I shot one and he dropped, but he wasn't quite dead," said Glenn. "That dog started after him. She was flying around on the ground with that damn coon. I was right in the middle of a king-sized scrap!" Lady finally ended the first raccoon's struggle and Glenn once again looked up into the tree. This time, the ending came quickly. " I shot the other coon. When he came down, he was dead," said Glenn.

Perhaps due to their shared adventures, Glenn and Lady developed an unusual mutual understanding. Glenn provided an example: "Dr. Covell gave the kids a pair of rabbits for Easter one time—one male and one female. Pretty soon, I had to build a rabbit hutch. Then we needed another hutch. Then that hutch got too crowded!"

Pool provided summer cool

Three generations of Riekes spent hot summer days around Glenn and Thelma's Cedar Creek Valley Farm swimming pool. The couple added the pool in1954. Layden and Eric swam in the pool during their high school years. Later, their children joined in the wet fun.

Thelma often served as lifeguard and set down one memorable rule. "The pool was about this deep all the way around, then had a hole in the middle," she explained. "The grandkids all knew when they saw the blue mark, they couldn't go beyond that!"

Lady showed as much mercy to rabbits as she did to other small animals—in other words, none. But one day Glenn confidently pitted Lady's regard for him against the dog's natural instincts. He told Kreamelmeyer, "I'm going to turn these rabbits loose." The hired hand replied, "Lady is going to kill them!" Glenn didn't think so. "I'm going to talk to her," he said. Glenn took Lady near a rabbit hutch and opened the door. "I reached in and picked up one of the little rabbits and put it on the ground. I said, 'Lady, this is not for you,'" remembered Glenn. "She looked at me and she looked at the rabbit. I said, 'No, leave it alone!'" Another rabbit hopped out of the hutch. Then another. Pretty soon the hutch was empty. "Lady had rabbits all around her, but she never touched one!" marveled Glenn.

Nor was the master's control temporary. After the tame rabbits had been released, Lady continued her vendetta against the farm's wild visitors. One evening, Glenn was sitting on the back porch while Lady patrolled the yard. Suddenly, a gray rabbit flashed around the corner of the tool shed. At high speed, the dog gave chase. When the pair came into Glenn's view again, he witnessed a miracle of self-control. Lady put her four feet down at once and stopped short. She recognized her would-be prey. "It was one of those tame rabbits!" Glenn exclaimed.

* * *

In the early 1950s, Glenn started a gun club for his friends and held meetings on the family farm. "We built a lit-

Real feathers flew at Rieke range

Real birds found the Rieke shooting range a dangerous place.

On several occasions, Glenn replaced the clay birds used for target practice with the real bill-and-feather variety. "We had so darn many mallard ducks, we decided we wanted to get rid of some of them," he explained. "So we had a duck shoot at the club." Glenn admitted the resulting slaughter didn't fit his idea of sport. "I never did like it, so we cut that out," he said.

Another time, the Riekes discovered wild dogs had turned their gun club grounds into a killing field. "We raised 17 great, big, broad-breasted, all male turkeys. They were great big birds, weighing about 25 pounds apiece," said Glenn. The dogs which roamed at night showed no mercy. "They'd catch the birds as they tried to get through a hog-wire fence. We'd find the rear end of the bird eaten off," Glenn said. "It was an awful mess."

tle log cabin. which is still setting there, south of the house, towards the edge of the woods, and put in a little electric trap shoot," he said. "We'd go out and shoot clay pigeons in the evening. It become a pretty good sport." The 25 or so members included Dr. Covell and Butler car dealer CJ Maxton.

During shoots, Layden and Eric worked in the traphouse, loading the mechanism that fired clay pigeons. For their troubles, they received a few dollars from club members. At times, they deserved combat pay. "The arm on the machine that sent the clay pigeons flying would sometimes slip," said Eric. "I got hit in the butt one time." On another occasion, a club member fired an errant shot. "My head was about that far from the metal cage," said Eric. "The shell hit right behind my head. Talk about reverberation!" Thelma, who listened as Eric told the stories, shuddered. "I was happy when you got out of that place!" she said.

Even if his bottom was at risk in the traphouse, the young entrepreneur found his bottom line thriving. "In the wintertime, when they'd get done shooting, all the guys would go inside the little cabin and warm up where I had a big, roaring fire going," Eric remembered. As the men rested, the boy went to work. "I'd pick up all the shells, burn off the paper and keep the copper. Then I'd go down to the junkyard and sell the copper!"

Later, Eric found yet another avenue to making money. "I noticed these guys were hungry and thirsty. So I said, 'Mom, I think we ought to serve hotdogs and soft drinks and coffee.'" Pretty soon, Eric was running a concession stand of sorts. "As soon as they'd get done shooting, I'd jump out of my post setting pigeons and come up to the cabin to sell hotdogs," he said.

With a laugh, he noted that he inherited the Rieke family's business acumen. "It turned into a good business because Mother would buy all the hotdogs. There was no cost involved for me!" he said.

* * *

In 1948, Glenn and Thelma remodeled Cedar Creek Valley Farm's old farmhouse. Rollie Muhn and his crew basically removed the entire insides of the century-old building and started from scratch. "You could drive a tractor-trailer through the house," said Thelma. "They put a fireplace in the front and had taken the kitchen off the back."

The radical surgery made it necessary for the family to find temporary living quarters. "We thought we could live in a trailer or something," remembered Thelma. "When we talked to the Rollie, I never will forget what he said: 'You can live in the basement of the

The Rieke boys enjoyed an all-American childhood growing up on Cedar Creek Valley Farm, as this idyllic 1945 photo shows. Here Layden and Eric, center, play host to (from left) Marcia Close, Dorothy Hauser and Beverly Close.

house.'" Thelma raised her eyebrows. With the quality of the basement and the hub-bub above, she firmly vetoed that option.

So, what could the family do? "They were making a workshop out of an old outbuilding. They had made it a little larger and re-lined the inside," said Thelma. "So they put our stuff in and the four of us lived there for six months."

While Thelma made a home out of the workshop, Glenn stay attuned to the construction. When a wood shortage could have tied up construction, Glenn and Muhn improvised. "Because of all the building going on after the war, you couldn't get lumber," Glenn explained. "So we went out and cut down oak trees on the property and took them to a lumber company." Big saws turned the trees into useable pieces and kilns dried the lumber. The turn-around time proved incredibly short. "Three weeks after the trees were cut, Rollie Muhn and his men were putting it on our walls in the living room!" said Glenn. Later sales brochures for the home made specific mention of the oak-paneled walls.

Work on the renovations began in May and just before Thanksgiving of 1948, the Riekes moved into their "new" home.

Furniture company served Riekes well

As Glenn provided the material for this book, he sat at a desk that had been his work companion for over 50 years. “It’s from Rom Webber, down in Batesville, Indiana. They made all our furniture,” said Glenn. “They specialized in solid oak pieces.” Thelma guessed the desk was made around 1942.

When the Riekes bought new furniture for their remodeled farm home in 1948, they again went to Webber. The dark wood pieces still served Glenn and Thelma 51 years later in their 1103 Cabriolet home.

The furniture company didn’t last as long. With new competition and the price of wood on the rise, Webber left its traditional construction techniques. “My nephew bought one of their desks. It looked just like this one,” said Glenn, patting his desk. “But when they would hit with a sweeper, you could see white plaster underneath.” The company ultimately went out of business.

RETOOLING

Chapter Seventeen

By 1945, eras were falling like rain. America's Great Depression had given way to a booming war-time economy. As restrictions on consumer goods and transportation eased, pent up demand kicked the economy into overdrive. Workers who had squirreled away savings feasted on a multitude of peacetime products. Production soared, unemployment dropped.

The ugly nationalistic, fascist-fueled fighting around the world all but ended. Boundaries in ravaged Europe were redrawn. Centuries old governmental traditions in the Far East were wiped away. In place of simple hatred came a new, complicated mistrust. New alliances criss-crossed old rivalries. A decades-long chess match for power—the Cold War—began.

And, on April 12, 1945, Franklin Delano Roosevelt died. Bucking tradition, he had run in and won four presidential elections. For 12 years and one month, he occupied the Oval Office. In both length of service and the jaunty, confident manner in which he performed his duties, he came to personify the title "Mr. President." At the helm for two of America's all-time historical crises—the

Great Depression and World War II—FDR's decisions continue to shape the country today.

America would have to adjust to the post-FDR era. The late president played power like a violin. Complicated and discordant themes ran wild until the master musician pulled them together and gave them harmony. His replacement, Harry S. Truman, played the presidency like a xylophone. Each note rang clear and distinct. When the musician pulled his mallet from one bar, he moved efficiently on to the next.

Within the country and around the world, doors were slamming shut while others opened. As each era ended, a new one began.

* * *

RMPC's high-flying, patriotic war service came to an end without ceremony. Like a book slamming closed, one day government orders for Jerry Can closures simply stopped. The company faced an identity crisis. It no longer resembled the small-town, family business it had been before the war. Beefed up with production muscle, it had become an internationally-known force. It had lived the high adrenaline rush that comes with literally tipping the balance of battles. Then suddenly, the great crisis was over, the victory won. Like returning servicemen, RMPC had to retrain itself to think like a civilian.

"My biggest problem at the office at that time was 'What the hell are we going to do the next day? What are we going to make?'" remembered Glenn. "In a 24-hour period, the government orders stopped. Here we are, with about 300 employees and a couple hundred thousand sets of closures on our floor, and we had no business!"

Jerry Can enjoyed after-war market

When government war orders stopped, Glenn faced a huge problem: what to do with a couple hundred thousand Jerry Can closures?

"Luckily, we were able to dispose of all of them in later years," Glenn said. Hardware stores across the country began to sell Jerry Cans. Returning servicemen recognized the hardy utility of their old field companion and bought them in great enough quantity to siphon off the surplus.

RMPC couldn't simply go back to its old customers. Before the war, two companies made most of the world's barrel closures—Rieke and American Flange Company of New York. When the government call came and RMPC took on war work, the company turned away peace-time customers. They in turn took their orders to American Flange.

AFC based its business on it's own closure invention. The technology for installing AF's closure involved different steps, processes, machinery and dies than RMPC's closure. As the Wellemeyer story earlier illustrated, once oil barrel manufacturers made a commitment to one closure or another, they were loath to change.

As a result, Glenn and his company struggled mightily for about two years following the war. "Things got pretty sticky," said Glenn. "We didn't have any standing with steel suppliers. After the war, you couldn't buy a pound of steel from anybody because big companies like General Motors—who was rebuilding the automobile industry—used it all. It was darn difficult for a small outfit, especially one that had been out of the market for a few years!"

Like a complicated chess match, the tough times set up a series of moves that Glenn would need to counter.

* * *

One of Roosevelt's legacies was the National Labor Relations Board. Created under the National Securities Act in 1935, it held the power to investigate and mediate unfair labor practices. The balance of power until this time had all been on the employer's side. The employer set terms of the workplace and employees acquiesced or went elsewhere. Workers suspected of attempting to organize a union could be fired without consequence.

With the emergence of the NLRB, power shifted to the workers. For the first time, they could organize with little fear of retribution. If a worker was fired purely for union activity, he could appeal to the NLRB. The NLRB, in turn, could force the employer to reinstate the employee.

Obviously, such a radical shift in power caused tremors and fissures in the American workplace. Abuse of power took place on both sides. Violence sometimes erupted.

Employers loudly charged that the NLRB—supposedly an unbiased mediator—favored labor. Some complaints could be attributed to the fact that company owners had been accustomed to no controls. In other words, just leveling the playing field was painful. Secondly, since very few unions had been able to openly discuss their agendas before the NLRB, the government agency's first efforts were aimed at allowing workers to hear from unions and to vote whether or not they wanted representation. In forcing employers to open their shops and hold elections, the NLRB appeared to be siding with labor.

In this corner, RMPC ....

Throughout his career, Glenn recognized American Flange Company as RMPC's greatest rival. AFC makes oil barrel closures based on a different technology. "There's been only two ways devised by man to press a ring into a drum–our caps and theirs," Glenn explained. "The method by which they put theirs in is distinctly different than ours."

Glenn admitted that the AFC-style closure can boast some advantages. "Their closure, they claim, is absolutely flush with the inside of the container, giving it better drainage of the container–that's a selling point for them." Glenn, however, disputes the advantage. "When you pour heavy viscosity oil out of a 55-gallon drum, how much more are you going to get out of theirs compared to ours? It's miniscule."

Glenn claims TW's design offers several distinct advantages over the competitors. "The plug seals right on the drum itself. There's only one gasket between the ring and the drum stock in our closure, and that's because when customers screw in a nozzle, if it didn't have a gasket seat, it could leak," he said. "They have to put a gasket between the ring and the drum stock and between the plug and the ring–they rely upon two gaskets."

To give an example of the difference in strength, Glenn said, "With my fist, I can hit our competitor's fittings on an 18-gauge steel drum hard enough to make it leak. In contrast, I can drop a barrel with our closure off a 20-story building, it can land right on the closure, and it won't leak. The force will flatten the drum, the drum might burst, but the closure won't leak!"

When RMPC gave up its civilian oil drum closure business during World War II, AFC filled the void. "After the war, they had a 90 percent monopoly on the oil drum and chemical company closure business," Glenn said. "It took us most of the next 50 years to get back to the point where we now have 80 percent of the commercial closure business and they've got 20 percent."

But there were other factors as well. With the NLRB to provide cover, unions charged hard. They aggressively recruited new members and sought new companies to organize. Their zeal frightened business owners. Even well-organized, legal attempts at unionization sometimes took on aspects of a siege. And, in a very real sense—especially before the Taft-Hartley Act amended some of NLRB's power—employers' charges of unfair treatment rang true. Before Russia and China proved the theory flawed in its practical application, before the Cold War and Senator Joseph McCarthy made it a bad word, Communism shone as a beacon of hope to struggling societies. American intellectuals in particular looked to Communism to create a more fair, ideal national community. Some Communist idealists slipped into the NLRB. They favored government price and wage controls over a competitive market. They looked down on company owners who sought profits. They glorified the common workers' struggles without question of motives or methods. Other times, simple graft tipped the scales. A lot of money and power was at stake, opening the door to unscrupulous elements in union and government positions of influence. Labor as a matter of policy went wherever there was a scrap. In some cases, picket lines in front of small-town companies were manned almost entirely by strikers imported from big cities. The type of person who enjoyed this confrontational moonlighting tended to be rough, at times outside the law. They played to win—whatever the means.

Of course, business owners crossed legal and ethical lines too. As Communism's shortcomings became apparent, they found it increasingly productive to shout "Red!" at any movement outside narrowly defined conservative, traditional business practices. They formed in-house "unions," which were really company-controlled decoys intended to cause legitimate unions to look elsewhere to organize. They hired their own toughs to intimidate the opposition.

The two sides in this literal battle for America's economic turf were clearly defined. And, for the most part in the 1930s and 40s, conservative, small Midwest communities such as Auburn sided with business owners. Of course, many business owners held community leadership positions which they used as bully pulpits. But along with that, the general populace genuinely believed in the virtues of the old labor-owner relationship. They trusted owners to play fair. They expected workers to submit to authority. When it became apparent workers would not go back to the old order, rumors on what was causing the labor movement ran rampant. As Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin rose to power, fears that a foreign fascist or Communist country was using labor to foment unrest unsettled America. When late in the 1930s a convoy of armed picketers heading to a Muncie strike passed through Auburn, local folk saw it as proof that labor intended to institute a Communistic, strong-arm society.

During this time the Rieke family's hero, BO Fink, emerged as a local leader against organized labor. After the NLRB ruled in 1938 that Auburn Foundry had unfairly stymied efforts by its work force to organize, BO went on the offensive. His efforts took him all the way to Washington, DC.

About 10 a.m., on June 14, 1939, the foundry owner sat before a United States Senate Committee on Education and Labor. BO told lawmakers he believed the NLRB's efforts had turned workers from friends of employers into enemies. He hinted that an NLRB official he had dealt with held Communist ideals. BO quoted the man as saying, "We must do away with this ruinous competition. When we get through with this plan it will be just a matter of taking your work, marking up your profit and going ahead, and thus relieve you of all those headaches." Fink struck a chord with other American businessmen when he recounted for the committee his reply to the NLRB official: "It may be that you can take this plant away from me and my men, and it may be that you can put me in jail for talking to you as I am. I know in Russia they are shooting fellows who talk like I am talking now. But, Mr. Disser, I want to say that you can do all of that to me and I will not comply with your request (to allow unionization)!"

The Associated Press picked up the story. The next morning newspapers across America trumpeted BO as a pro-business hero. "Labor Board Hit By Businessman," declared one paper. Another headline read, "Labor Board And the CIO Are Assailed."

BO won the battle but lost the war. In September of 1941, to settle a long appeal court process, BO signed an agreement allowing foundry workers to hold a union election. They voted to organize.

A similar story would be repeated many times across the country—right across town, in fact..

* * *

During RMPC's war work, Glenn significantly increased his work force. Because workers were in short supply, the company lowered its usual high standards for incoming employees. In general, Glenn wasn't pleased with workers who were moving into DeKalb County from elsewhere. "They were absolutely no good!" he said. Attitudes in the plant deteriorated. For the first time in its history, RMPC was forced to deal with worker unrest.

Glenn maintained that locally-bred workers had little interest in organizing unions. But workers from elsewhere brought with them a different attitude towards work and their employer. In summer or fall of 1941, a group of these employees first approached RMPC with a request to organize.

When Glenn refused, the Steelworkers Organizing Committee, CIO, decided to play hardball. It ordered the RMPC plant closed. "They brought in toughs from South Bend and Fort Wayne just to have people on the picket line," remembered Glenn. "The public didn't know whether the pickets were our workers or not. They just saw a big force out front of the plant that was apparently dissatisfied with the way things were run!" The Steelworkers hoped RMPC employees sympathetic to unionization would refuse to cross the picket line. Without employees, the plant would be unable to operate.

Glenn's fighting instincts were aroused. TW had never let another man intimidate him and his son was determined not to either. "We weren't about to close our plant. We couldn't stomach that!" he said. "So we asked our employees whether they would continue to work if we offered them facilities to stay in the plant." Glenn estimated 80 percent of RMPC's employees agreed. "The others were not really in favor of the strike, but they were afraid to cross the picket line," he said.

Using army cots, the company created makeshift barracks inside the plant. Women—which already comprised half of the work force—stayed on one floor, men on the other. The company's restaurant beefed up its operation to serve meals around the clock.

For more than a week, the plant operated under siege. "The strike started on a Friday. We contacted the employees the best we could over the weekend and told them if they wanted to continue working, we would guarantee their safe entry into the plant on

Monday," said Glenn. "We asked them to stand out on the street corner until everybody was together, then everyone would go in as a body."

At the appointed time, about 20 men walked ahead to create an opening in the picket line. Glenn came away from the experience with one clear impression. "The women picketers could be so foul-mouthed," he said. "They would insult people. Oh, they were dandies!" Luckily, on the first day at least, nothing worse than verbal barbs were thrown.

With workers living inside and the picket line outside, a tense stand-off ensued. Violence occurred, but damaged only property. "The strikers punctured tires on all the cars sittin' outside and they broke some windows in the plant," remembered Glenn. The workers inside, meanwhile, prepared for any escalation of hostilities. "We had guns in the plant," said Glenn matter-of-factly.

The community in general backed RMPC, according to Glenn. "One day I was sitting in the office and the telephone rang. It was a farmer in Waterloo," Glenn recalled. The farmer said, "Mr. Rieke, we've been reading about that strike you've got out there, and that picket line. I've got about 100 farmers here that have banded together. If you say the word, we"ll bring our pitchforks over and we'll clean that place up!"

Glenn admitted the offer sounded tempting, but a cooler head prevailed. "Clark Springer, our attorney, was sitting in the office with me during this call," said Glenn. When Springer was asked what he thought of the offer, the attorney said, "Oh, god, Glenn, somebody's going to get hurt! Then there will be trouble. So thank them, but don't accept it." Glenn reluctantly declined the farmers' offer.

Looking back, Glenn regretted his handling of this initial run-in with organized labor. "We were dumb!" he admitted. "It was my first experience with a strike." His naivete continued when the NLRB arrived to arbitrate an end to the stand-off. "I wasn't too familiar with the NLRB—I had heard about it, that was about all," Glenn said (later, he came to believe the government agency was a political tool used by Democrats to gather votes from the working class).

After listening to both sides, the NLRB decreed that RMPC reinstate eight workers who the union charged had been fired solely for attempting to organize. "One of these people we refused to bring back," said Glenn. "The labor board agreed and we didn't have to return him. But the other seven came back to work."

Once again, an Auburn company lost the larger battle. After the settlement agreement ended the strike, NLRB oversaw elections among RMPC workers. By a majority of two votes, the United Steel Workers Union was elected to serve as the employees' official bargaining agent.

Glenn, however, never accepted the results of the election. "I found out the union organizer and the NLRB man were roommates at the hotel in Auburn and kept the ballot box in their bedroom," he said. "The union was supposed to have won by a couple of votes. Well, I don't believe to this day it was a legal vote!"

* * *

When the war drew to a close, the tide seemed to turn against RMPC. The company faced a long, unprofitable struggle to rebuild its civilian customer base. Unionization caused tension to build inside the plant. A crisis seemed imminent. "We felt we had to do something!" said Glenn.

A solution arrived in the form of a suitor. Since TW first considered selling the company six years earlier, RMPC had grown more attractive. Larger companies regularly looked its way. Glenn consistently rejected offers out of hand, but in 1944 he faced a new set of circumstances. "We felt we should sell while the business was going good," Glenn explained. "Our children were getting married and having children of their own. Mother needed an income."

With Irvin's counseling, Glenn decided to sell controlling interest in RMPC to Miller Manufacturing Company of Detroit. Under terms of the sale, Glenn would continue as president of the company and would sit on its board of directors.

Despite the continuity, Glenn found himself in a new, unsettling position. "I never had worked for anybody else, always had been my own boss," he said. "It was a little difficult to take!" Effort wasn't the problem. "I never changed my work ethic. I'd say I put more energy into the company when they owned it," said Glenn. "If I was going to be working for somebody else, I wanted to feel like I was earning my salt." Control—or rather, lack of it—caused Glenn's discomfort. "At no time did I really agree with the business practices the new owners followed," he said.

Events would prove Glenn's lack of confidence well founded. It should first be noted that Miller owned RMPC during one of the company's roughest stretches. As explained earlier, the company struggled after the war to forge a new identity. On the other hand, Miller—whose main business was manufacturing service tools for Chrysler cars—had strayed far from its area of expertise. "They knew nothing about our business," said Glenn. "They got themselves behind the eight ball financially."

In 1947, Miller faced a crisis. "They put money in escrow to buy a big forging plant," Glenn explained. "When they went into the deal—interest rates were four percent at the time—they felt they could go to any insurance company for a loan. They soon learned that wasn't true. Insurance companies tightened up. They wouldn't lend a dime unless you had a gold brick to back it up."

Miller didn't want to lose the forging plant. It looked desperately about for ways to raise cash. That's when its eyes settled on RMPC, an investment that hadn't turned out as planned. "I was out in Montana with Brother Irvin on a hunting trip. We were up in the mountains when a courier brought a special delivery letter addressed to me," remembered Glenn. "It was from Detroit, the president of the Miller company. They wanted to know if our family would be willing to buy the company back. They needed an answer right away."

Glenn couldn't give a quick answer. Although he knew which way his heart voted, he wanted time to think. "So that morning, Brother Irvin and I went hunting," said Glenn. "We sat up on the mountainside and I showed him this letter." Irvin asked, "What do you think?" Glenn felt his leadership instincts grow warm. "Between you and me," he said, "I think things have changed around. I've got a lot of faith in our company right now. If we can arrange to buy it back for what we sold it for or better, we ought to consider it." Irvin, ever confident in his brother's judgement, agreed. Then Irv asked, "But what do we do if they want an answer right away?" Glenn didn't want to give up the hunting trip. Nor, did he want to appear too eager to discuss a deal. "I'll give them an answer: that I'll be back in a week!" he said. And that's the message the courier took back to Miller.

When a week later Glenn returned to Auburn, he met with Miller officials. "They told me they were willing to sell the company for exactly what they paid for it," he said. Although Glenn knew the offer represented a sweet deal to the family, he used the leverage of Miller's desperation to push the price lower. "You know what the situation has been with this company," he replied. "We haven't been able to do much after the war. I don't think the company is worth as much as it was." At the end of negotiations, the Rieke family bought back TW's business for much less than they sold the factory three years earlier. "Not only that, Miller never paid any dividends!" said Glenn. "That profit went back into the company to buy new machinery." In other words, the Riekes made money through the selling-buying back transaction, plus they ended up with a company in better physical shape than it had been to begin with! "We come out smelling like roses," is how Glenn put it.

To meet his obligations in the sale, Glenn borrowed $2.5 million from Lincoln National Bank in Fort Wayne. Irvin put in a third more, purchasing 21,000 shares of stock to Glenn's 14,000 shares.

Despite his majority ownership stake, Irvin entrusted the decision-making to his younger brother. Glenn returned to wielding untethered control at RMPC.

* * *

For eight years after the first strike, having a union in the family business continued to grate on Glenn. "I was so disgusted with the union organizing committee!" he said. "They were always trying to tell me how to run the business." So he dug in his heals and refused to cooperate. "I had enough spunk about me that wouldn't let me cater to them," Glenn said. "We stood in their way on everything they wanted to do. They put in demands, and we'd pay no attention to them!"

After the war ended and, with it, the bulk of RMPC's business, the work force slimmed. Many of the people not originally from DeKalb County left. With mainly locals at the plant, Glenn felt his hand growing stronger. Then a split between the local chapter of Steelworkers and the CIO opened the window of opportunity further.

A disagreement sprouted during contract negotiations in 1949. One plank of the proposed contract smacked Glenn right in the face. "Does everyone have to join the union?" he asked. When the labor representatives answered in the affirmative, Glenn replied, "I don't agree with that!" Automatic membership also meant automatic dues. In other words, even if an employee wanted nothing to do with the union, they would be forced to pay dues and be part of the group.

Many RMPC workers sided with Glenn. They wanted to decide on their own whether or not to join the union. The local bargaining committee left the "union shop" clause out of the contract and the membership ratified it.

That's when the trouble began. The International Union of the Steelworkers 'Organizing Committee, CIO, refused to sign the contract its own local affiliate had negotiated. Not only did the international group dismiss the contract, it went one step further and called on RMPC employees to strike!

The international's inflexible stand had the exact opposite effect of what was intended. Instead of rallying behind their union, local members turned their backs to it. They didn't like being ordered around. Bad feelings grew.

With loyal workers leaning his way, Glenn went on the offensive. "I told the NLRB that I'd like to have an election at our plant," remembered Glenn. "They asked what I meant and I said, 'I don't think our employee group wants a union to represent them. I'd like to settle the thing once and for all through an election!'"

The NLRB was taken aback. Usually workers asked for a vote, not the company. Why? It was generally assumed that workers would want to organize. It was just as generally assumed that, once a union was in place, workers would be satisfied with it. Glenn was gambling. He was betting RMPC employees' regard for him and the management team against their feelings for the union.

Despite the unusual request, as an impartial referee the NLRB owed both sides an equal right to call for the question. The NLRB granted Glenn's request and began to prepare for a vote. On August 31, 1949, Glenn wrote a letter to his employees. It outlined the company's stance on issues and ended each section with the promise, "These policies will be continued by the company, with or without a union." When the vote was taken, employees showed who they trusted. Glenn won his gamble and the union was dissolved.

A little more than three years later, another union—the Rubber, Cork, Linoleum and Plastic Workers Union, C.I.O.—asked the NLRB to conduct a vote. Once again RMPC workers would be asked whether or not they wished to be represented by a union.

Glenn had learned from his previous experiences. He would base his arguments on simple matters of fact. But, he said with a wink, he wasn't above playing a little dirty pool.

Glenn requested that the vote be held on Dec. 30, 1952. What the union didn't realize was that this date immediately followed an annual week-long shut down at RMPC. The union effectively would be blocked out of the most critical time period in which to pitch their plea to workers.

Glenn, on the other hand, presented his case using every advantage at his disposal. "Every Christmas, we'd have a big party in our cafeteria. All the employees would be eating roast turkey and cranberries and everything that goes with it," he said. Glenn used the family-like occasion to make his big sales pitch. "We told the employees we had made arrangements for a vote to be held under the auspices of the NLRB as to whether or not this union should represent them. I said, 'It's up to you,' but I told them in plain language that it was near impossible for me to work with a union."

Then Glenn handed out printed copies of a letter he'd written. Borrowing large passages from its 1949 predecessor, the letter outlined the company's commitment to its workers. Then it pointed out just how carefully RMPC had lived up to its commitment.

The letter, printed in its entirety appears below:

December 24, 19 5 2

As you know, a petition has been filed by the Rubber, Cork, Linoleum and Plastic Workers Union, C.I.O., with the National Labor Relations Board in which such Union seeks to be designated as the bargaining unit for all of our production employees. By agreement, an election will be held in the plant on December 30, 1952, and at that time our employees will have the opportunity to vote on the question as to whether they desire a local of the Rubber, Cork, Linoleum and Plastic Workers Union, C.I.O., to represent them as a bargaining agent or, whether they desire not to be represented by any union. These two choices will appear on the ballot.

In the beginning, let me make it clear that any of our employees has a legal right to become a member of any union and I have not and will not interfere with the right of any employee to make that choice. However, on the other hand, I have an equal right to state to you my position in this matter, so long as I do not interfere or attempt to interfere with your free choice in arriving at your decision in connection with the coming election.

There has been no active union representation in this plant for over three years and I personally feel that both the Company and the employees have been better off without a union than they were during the period in which a union had bargaining rights in our plant. In the past, unions in this plant have caused a barrier to be set up between the company and our employees, creating friction and tending to destroy the fine relationship that has always existed between us. I think the record of this Company in dealing with our employees and the present welfare and status of our employees justifies this conclusion and I now want to discuss with you some of the facts and circumstances which I believe justify this viewpoint.

In August, 1949, the employees of this Plant were represented by the Steelworkers Organizing Committee, C.I.O., as their bargaining agent and the Union and the Company were at that time conducting negotiations on a new contract. You will recall that we reached an agreement with the local bargaining committee of our employees and that a contract was prepared and signed by the Company and by the local bargaining committee of our employees and, that the International Union of the Steelworkers Organizing Committee, C.I.O., refused to sign this contract and threatened to call a strike. The controversy with the International Union arose, largely, over my refusal to grant a union shop and a check off of union dues. My position was at that time that every employee had a legal right to join a union and that every employee had the same legal right to refrain from joining a union and that I would not be a party to any contract that would compel any employee to join a union against his or her will. I thought our position was correct at that time and I still think so.

On August 31, 1949, we mailed to each employee of this Company a letter in which I stated my position on the above subject and in which letter I also set forth in detail the policy of our Company toward our employees as to wages, working conditions, fringe benefits and other matters of importance to our employees. I stated in that letter that these policies would be carried out by the Company with or without a union.

For the benefit of the present employees who were not employed on August 31, 1949, I quote herein from the statement of policies set forth in that letter as follows:

1. Seniority is an established policy in this plant and will continue to be the policy in the future, with or without a union.

2. This company has paid and will continue to pay the highest possible wages, in line with a sound operation of this plant and will at all times make every effort to keep our wage schedules in line with comparable industrial plants in this community doing comparable work, with or without a union.

3. This company has established policies of fringe benefits such as paid vacations, retirement pay, health and accident insurance, hospital benefits, shift differentials, bonus payments for holiday work and others. These policies will be continued by the company, with or without a union.

4. This company appreciates the fact that satisfied employees are essential to a satisfactory and profitable operation of this business and our policy has been and will be to deal with our employees on a fair basis, consistent with a sound operation of the business.

I now submit to you, three years later, that these policies set forth in my letter have been carried out in good faith by the Company and I further call your attention to the fact that our relations with our employees during that time have been very satisfactory and of a mutual benefit to both the Company and the employees.

Among the other established policies of this Company, not mentioned in said letter, has been the efforts of the Company to furnish steady employment at all times to its employees and to avoid lay offs of the employees. In order to do this, in past years, the Company has at various times invested large sums of money in building unusual quantities of stock, far beyond our normal requirements, in order to assure uninterrupted employment. In other cases employees have been shifted to other jobs, frequently when their services were not required, in order to avoid layoffs. This assurance of steady employment is important to you and your family and I assure you that this policy will be continued in the future whenever it is within our means and abil-

ity to do so. This policy was established without the intervention of any union and will be continued, with or without a union in our plant.

I also call your attention to the fact that since the date of the letter above referred to that I have liberalized our sick and accident insurance plan for the benefit of our employees and it will be my policy to continue to take such steps in the future in order to keep our sick and accident program in conformity to changing future conditions. I would also call your attention to the fact that I have voluntarily created a retirement plan for our employees and the liberality of this retirement plan is not surpassed by any other retirement plan in any other plant in this area.

In addition, since July, 1949, we have placed in effect the following wage increases:

January 30, 1950	*5 cents*
August 21, 1950	*5 cents*
December 18, 1950	*5 cents*
December 10, 1951	*3 cents*
January 21, 1952	*2 cents*
August 25, 1952	*2 cents*
November 24, 1952 *retroactive to Oct. 13, 1952)*	*15 cents*
Total	*37 cents*

All of these wage increases were made voluntarily by the Company and constitute an average increase in wages, as compared to the wage scale of July, 1949, in the amount of 31%. I shall continue to make such future increases in wages, from time to time, as may be justified by conditions and to such extent as may be permitted by the Wage Stabilization Act or, as may be permitted, under exceptions to the Act, by the Wage Stabilization Board. I assure you that this will be my policy with or without a union in this plant.

The decision which you will make at the coming election is a decision that is important to both you and the Company, not only now, but in the future. I wish to state in closing that I feel, as stated before, that both you and the Company will be better off without a union than you will with a union. However, this is your decision to be made by you but I do want to urge you to give thoughtful consideration to the facts set forth in this letter and I am asking you to read it carefully and to discuss it with your wife or husband and your family, before arriving at your decision. I feel that if you will do this that you will agree with me in the conclusion that I have come to and which I have tried to state in this letter.

Sincerely yours,
Glenn T. Rieke
President

NOTE: The winning side in this election will be determined only by a majority of the actual votes cast. If you are not present to cast your ballot—you will have no voice in deciding this matter.

PLEASE —— EVERYONE ——VOTE.

When the union heard about the Christmas dinner, read the letter, and realized it would have no time to respond, it cried foul. Glenn shrugged and implied that the way things worked out simply showed that he knew his plant and workers intimately while the union did not.

On the day after the shut-down, the employees filed into the plant. Before beginning work, they walked upstairs to where the vote would be held. Two men from the NLRB handed out cards, then watched as the employees dropped the marked cards in a ballot box.

The vote couldn't have been more of a mandate. According to Glenn, 85 percent of RMPC employees voted against representation. "About 15 percent of them wanted the union, but within six months, none of those 15 percent of the people worked there any more," said Glenn. "The rest of the people give them such a hard time, they went next door to work for the Dana Corporation."

The vote closed the book on unionization for the remainder of Glenn's time at RMPC. And his legacy lives on. To the present day, all Rieke plants—even the one in heavily unionized Mexico —remain open shops.

* * *

When the post-war struggles ended, the stars seemed to line up for RMPC. New machinery bought during the high-production war years were hungry for work. Labor firmly backed the administration and the Rieke family was firmly entrenched in the administration. RMPC was lean, mean and ready for a long hard run.

The timing couldn't have been better. For—known only to a few company designers—RMPC was developing a revolutionary new product which would begin a new era of success.

GETTING FLEXIBLE

Chapter Eighteen

During his post-war scramble to regain civilian customers, Glenn noticed something new at big oil packaging plants. "As I visited these drum plants, I'd see them making 5-gallon pails with metal, screw-on caps," recalled Glenn. Both oil packagers and customers loved the convenient new 5-gallon containers.

Just as universally, packagers and customers hated the new containers' closures. "They had extendible pour spouts the could be pushed back into the container when they weren't being used," explained Glenn. "The farmers would carry these 5-gallon containers on his wagon to put oil in his tractors and motors out in the field with the spout in the pouring position. Coming out of the inside of the container and covered with oil, it acted like a magnet to all kinds of dust and dirt. Then, when the farmer was finished, he'd push the dirty spout back down into the container. Sand and grit on the outside of the spout was now floating inside his container!"

The all-purpose container needed a closure with new levels of flexibility. The closure required a spout which stuck out from the container to allow customers to efficiently pour liquid into small engines or other such applications without getting the container itself messy. But, when in the closed position, the closure needed to lie nearly flush with the container top so vast numbers of containers could be stacked for storage by manufacturers and middlemen.

For the Rieke family, the problem produced deja vu. Like their father, Glenn and Irvin saw a huge market for closures which wasn't being adequately satisfied. Sensing an opportunity, the Rieke brothers and the rest of the company charged. "We could have made the same closures others were making and probably sold a few," said Glenn. "But that didn't fit our approach to life. We set out to solve the problem and we were determined to do it."

A solution did not come easily. As if looking for a secret passage up a steep mountain in the dark, the brothers searched fruitlessly several long years without success. "We tried all sorts of spouts and different configurations, but we couldn't solve the problem of dirt getting down in the container!" said Glenn. "How could you have a closure and spout that wouldn't stick up when not in use? If you left the spout out, the containers couldn't be stacked. And five gallon pails had to be stacked or they took up too much floor room."

Adversary turns to advocate

After the war, RMPC attempted to turn adversaries into advocates. One man symbolized this struggle more than any other.

Truman Floyd worked as a purchasing agent for Inland Steel Container Company, which made oil barrels in Chicago. "He was a son-of-a-gun to deal with," remembered Glenn. "He threw every obstacle in our way." But through their persistent efforts, RMPC made an impression on this tough nut.

Glenn explained: "Irvin and I were going to Washington on the Capital Limited. When we got on at Garrett and walked through our car, we passed a bedroom. Who was sitting there, but Truman Floyd! We said hello and went on to our seats in the chair car."

Not very far into the trip, Glenn and Irvin were surprised when Floyd paid them a visit. "He just started talking to us," Glenn remembered. "He wanted to know if we had a man to work on the West Coast. He wanted to quit Inland and represent us out there!"

The Riekes hired Floyd and made him the company's West Coast sales representative, based in San Francisco (the office later moved to Los Angeles). He proved so valuable, he eventually became sales manager for the entire company.

Floyd made RMPC's first in-roads south of the border. In the early 1950s, he garnered closure orders from PEMEX, the Mexican government-run oil industry.

Floyd stayed with the company until his retirement at age 65.

The stage was set for a defining moment in RMPC history. "One day in 1947, I was sitting at my desk in the plant, working over some blueprints, when brother Irvin come in," said Glenn. Irvin had just gone through an unsettling morning. Rex, his little boy, felt pain in his lower abdomen and had to be hospitalized. Doctors attributed Rex's problem to an impacted bowel. The tube-like lower intestine had folded back onto itself, completely shutting off the pathway through which the body got rid of waste. "I had never heard of an impacted bowel," said Glenn, "So my brother took a pencil and paper to diagram the problem."

As Glenn watched Irvin draw, inspiration struck. Halfway through the medical lesson, Glenn suddenly said, "Brother, you just give me an idea how to make a spout that can come down flush with the top of a container!"

A flurry of activity followed. Glenn designed a pour spout made out of rubber. When not in use, it could be folded into itself, flush with the top of the container. Since the outside wall of the spout stayed outside, its design solved the dirt-in-the-oil problem as well! Full of excitement, Glenn ordered a test run of 10,000 rubber spout closures from RMPC's old friend, the Auburn Rubber Company. These went to a customer in Ohio which agreed to try the closures on small containers of weed killer.

The bubble of joy quickly burst. Results were disappointing, to say the least. "The weed killer ate the rubber spout so completely, the metal cap fell inside of the container," Glenn said. "It was a debacle!"

Still, with TW-style determination, Glenn believed in his idea and set out to overcome any setbacks. He had heard about a new product called polyethylene. An English company developed the tough, plastic-like substance. Because it was impervious to oil and water, the Allies used polyethylene during World War II to replace cloth coatings on electrical wires. Through a licensing agreement, America's own DuPont Company got permission to manufacture the substance in the US. About the same time RMPC struggled with its flexible spout problem, DuPont set up a trial plant on the East Coast and began manufacturing polyethylene wire coating.

Glenn decided to contact DuPont directly. "Polyethylene was supposed to withstand hydrocarbons, oils and gasoline," he recalled. "So I asked DuPont if it could be molded in injection molding machines. They said it could, so I asked them to send us some."

Glenn then found a plant in Cleveland which could produce injection moldings and ordered 10,000 polyethylene closures. The flexible spouts were molded in the upright position, as if ready to pour. This fact wouldn't seem significant at the time, but it later proved to be vital.

Once again, hopes at Rieke soared. "The first batch looked beautiful!" remembered Glenn. He ordered the polyethylene spouts closed so they would lie flush—as they typically would be used by manufacturers—and installed on 5-gallon containers.

But once again, disappointment followed. "I opened a couple of the containers before they shipped and found some of them had cracked," remembered Glenn. He ordered the shipment delayed, then checked the spouts again. "There were a few more cracked closures," Glenn said. "I started going through all the boxes and all the closures were starting to crack!"

Glenn wracked his brain. Polyethylene had all the properties the spout needed; if only the cracking could be overcome! A solution seemed so close, yet just out of reach. Then Glenn had a second inspiration. "I got the idea of molding the spout in the collapsed position," he said. "Then when you'd pull the spout up, you'd get compression on the inside. The outside wouldn't crack open!" The Cleveland company made a second test run of polyethylene spouts following Glenn's instructions.

With cautious high hopes, RMPC tested this third attempt. The FlexSpout, as it came to be called, worked like a charm!

The FlexSpout's impact was immediate and dramatic. Orders poured in. With the doors to oil company purchasing agent offices suddenly reopened, RMPC found a resurgence in orders for its original oil barrel closures as well. The little spout was invented in 1947. By 1950, after building a plastic plant to manufacture the new product, the FlexSpout showed a profit.

Through the FlexSpout, RMPC reinvented itself. From a small family company leaning on only one inventive product and simply reacting to its market, suddenly RMPC became a company on the edge, proactive to problems, a strong bull charging into new markets.

When oil companies soon afterward began making small liquid containers out of plastic, RMPC answered the bell once more. Glenn led the company to create the new, all-plastic PolyGrip closure. Over the years, FlexSpout technology has led to a large variety of plastic products for containers, everything from large barrel closures down to small, child-proof medicine bottle caps.

Today, injection-molded closures account for 55 percent of the Rieke Corporation's business. In 1998, the company produced 100 *million* such closures!

A new era had arrived.

* * *

Glenn personally had lots of options after the war. He had the means to "retire" to a ranch, like Irvin. He had a legitimate business concern in the Auburn Airport and a genuine love of aviation to nudge him in that direction. He had his dairy farm and Cedar Creek Valley Farm, both of which could continue to grow into commercial agriculture concerns. Of course, he could continue to work for RMPC, yet let the worries and responsibilities of running the company fall on other shoulders.

The FlexSpout redefined RMPC.

But, once the Rieke family regained ownership of RMPC and the FlexSpout gave the company new life, Glenn threw himself into the closure business. He saw each problem as a challenge, each obstacle as an opportunity. And his sight went beyond immediate concerns, stretching far into the future.

At the same time he worked on rebuilding the company's civilian customer base and developing FlexSpout, Glenn attacked RMPC's many logistical problems. He became convinced that the challenge of making more product could no longer be met by simply adding workers. In TW's day when much of the work was done by hand, that would have been the answer, but a new age required new solutions. More and more, Glenn poured his energies into developing automatic machines to bear an increased share of the labor burden. He found the challenge stimulating, perfectly suited to his talents and temperament.

From 1945 to 1975, Glenn designed and built machines uniquely qualified to meet RMPC's needs. The results were profound. "Today, they make with a handful of people what it took 1,200 people for us to do during the war," Glenn said by way of example. The mechanical creations from this period increased production not only in Auburn, but in other RMPC plants, in licensee companies and in customer factories around the world. Not coincidentally, this mechanical revolution took place during some of RMPC's greatest expansion.

The change was so well defined, Glenn came to call the 1940s through the 1980s the company's "Mechanical Age."

* * *

Despite his growing maturation and leadership, Glenn retained the ability to join in a little juvenile fun. In the mid 1940s, Bill Fitzsimmons and Earl Summers happened upon an estate sale in Kendallville. The elderly owner of a harness shop had died. One of the items for sale was a life-sized, dapple grey, papier-mache horse which the old fellow used to model his leather products in the shop's front window.

Fitzsimmons and Summers bought the horse for $15 but had to leave it in Kendallville since they didn't have a truck. Not wanting to bear the full brunt of their new toy's expense, when they went back to work, Fitz and Summers formed the DeKalb County Horse Thief Association. They recruited eight other desperadoes—including Glenn—to pitch in $1.50 and assume part ownership of the steed. Then, one day after work, they took a company truck back to Kendallville and picked up their new charge.

The practical jokes inspired by the horse would turn into Auburn legends. As their first official group function, the horse thieves drove the papier-mache mount—tethered in the bed of the company truck with his life-like head appearing over the cab—to fellow employees' homes. Details of the visits vary, but in a typical example the lady of the house answered the door and the conversation went something like this:

There really was a horse thief association

The practical jokers of RMPC's Horse Thief Association modeled their group on several actual DeKalb County organizations. They simply forgot to include the word "Detective" or "Detection" in their name.

In June of 1855, a group of prominent county citizens formed the long-winded DeKalb County Horse Thief Detecting Company of the State of Indiana. Fourteen years later, a similar group named the DeKalb County Vigilance Committee was formed. Both group's main goal was the detection and apprehension of horse thieves.

Some sort of horse-thief detecting group survived in the county until well into the 1900s. The National Horse Thief Detective Association operated from 1860 through 1928 and a local chapter lasted at least that long.

As a sign of the times, in later years the organization tracked reports of stolen automobiles.

"Where does your husband want this horse?"

"What do you mean?"

"Your husband bought this horse and we've come to deliver it."

The joke ended when the wife called her unsuspecting husband to task and the ruse was uncovered. The incidents usually ended on a genial note, with the horse thieves invited inside for a quick round of drinks. Then they traveled to the next house and repeated the prank.

As more people in Auburn were taken in by the horse, his reputation grew. Wherever folks saw the animal, they figured a horse thieves' practical joke was in the works. Away at his Montana ranch, Irvin remained blissfully unaware of the growing body of work by the horse thieves.

That would soon change.

At the time, Irvin's Auburn home was a farm on the east side of State Road 427, about a 1/2 mile south of town. The horsenappers decided his unguarded stucco castle offered a perfect opportunity for their mischief. Gaining entry into Irvin's house, association members tied the horse to the piano. They placed a bale of hay for nourishment in front and a well-aged horse pie behind.When all was in place, they photographed the scene.

The picture soon graced RMPC's annual gift calendars, which were sent to company's customers. Beneath the photo, the horse thieves wrote: "I.H. Rieke, Horse Raiser; Call Montana, reverse charges to this number, day or night, 24 hours a day, for prices." For several months afterward, Irvin received mysterious phone calls from laughing customers who inquired about a horse.

Irvin learned what was causing his consternation when he returned home in late fall. He opened the door of his farmhouse, saw the horse, and–according to one account–nearly dropped dead.

Irvin recovered in a mood to retaliate. He asked Fitzsimmons how to get even with Summers (Irvin mistakenly thought Summers acted alone in perpetrating the calendar scam).

The plan the two hatched confirmed Fitz's genius for practical jokes. When the horse had first been purchased, Fitzsimmons told folks that the steed's former owner had been filthy rich, but that after the harness maker's death, no evidence of wealth had been found. Fitz repeatedly told Summers he believed the old man stuffed money inside the saddle model's hollow body. Summers continually dismissed the story as an invention of Bill's considerable imagination.

To give Summers' nose a twist, Bill and Irvin decided to turn the horse into a genuine treasure trove. Irvin went to the bank and withdrew $1,000 in cash. The tail of the horse came off (a popular gag was to pull off the tail, look into the hollow cavity and say, "What this horse needs is a drink!"). Irvin and Fitz then shoved the bills inside. Finally, they laid the horse on its side on Irvin's front porch and cut a hole in the belly. Bill sat next to the horse armed with a long set of tongs and a flashlight. When the props and actors were in place, Irvin instructed his cook to call Earl Summers.

Summers pulled his car into Irvin's driveway in a cloud of dust. He charged up to the porch and, according to Glenn, said something to this effect: "Damn! We're rich, aren't we!" Fitzsimmons corrected his practical joke partner. "*We*?" Bill asked. "You didn't believe me. This money is mine! Isn't it, Irvin?" Irvin, leaning against a porch support to enjoy the play, laughed and answered, "Finder's keepers, I guess!"

Summers tried to convince Irvin that altogether ten fellows had been in on the purchase of the horse and the calendar joke, so any treasure should be shared. Irvin, for the first time hearing the extent of the prank against him, only laughed harder. As Summers sputtered, Fitzsimmons continued to pull money out of the horse. Summers followed Bill into the house where, over a glass of Scotch, Fitz counted out his booty. When he continued to claim sole right to the money, Summers left in a huff.

The next day at work, other members of the Horse Thief posse heard Summers' side of the story. For several weeks they gave Fitzsimmons the cold shoulder. Summers ran the RMPC cafeteria at the time. Glenn chuckled when he recalled how Bill had to eat his lunch at a table all alone.

Irvin added another chapter to the tale when he called the Horse Thief members together to tell another fib. "I happen to know Bill decided he was going to divide that money up amongst all the members of the Horse Thief Association," Irvin told the fellas one night just before Christmas. "He thought he'd buy Series E bonds with the money, so everybody in the group would get a $100 bond!"

Over night, everybody's attitude toward Bill changed and he was back in the group. But the newfound friendliness disappeared as quickly as it appeared. "About a day or so later, they got talkin' together and they figured Bill could buy a $100 bond for $75 and keep the difference!" Glenn explained.

The long-running saga came to a quick close when a newspaper account reported Bill's horse belly windfall as fact instead of fiction. The deceased harness maker's family read the article and threatened to sue to recover the money. That's when Irvin and Bill decided to come clean.

But that wasn't the end of the Horse Thief Association. The group decided to have a little fun at the DeKalb County Free Fall Fair one year. "I don't know where the devil we found him, but there was a young farmer boy—tall, lanky kid, with bib overalls, just as hayseed as you could make him—and he had the damnedest, gray, old sway-back horse, an old bag of bones, ribs sticking out and all," Glenn recalled. The horse thieves decided to make the swayback nag their official entry in fair competitions. "We had our own judges stand set up and our own microphone, said Glenn with a chuckle. "We were giving out our own prizes." In other words, when the county's official judges picked winners and handed out $5 or $10 bills for prizes, the unofficial horse thief judges awarded their own prizes. "We'd announce the winner of our "grand prize," which always went to this hayseed and his horse," said Glenn. "And he'd get $25!"

The ruse produced memorable moments. "The straw that broke the camel's back was when they had the weight-pulling contest," said Glenn. "They had great big sleds loaded down with sacks of wheat that the horses strained to pull across the ground." The horse thieves decided to approach the contest the only way they knew how:

Cheat.

"We had a sled fixed up that didn't weigh 20 pounds," said Glenn as he laughed. "It had a great big weight that looked like a piece of concrete, but it was actually made out of papier-mache." The fair crowd had come to look forward to the swayback's valiant, but often hilariously futile efforts. Their expectations made the next few moments all the more treasured. "Here come all the horses straining at their loads," said Glenn, "and the sway back walks right by all the other horses, barely breaking a sweat, to become the winner!"

The crowd roared with laughter.

"We about wrecked that show for them," Glenn admitted. "Oh, everybody was having a big time!"

* * *

Glenn proved flexibility in his leadership skills when he became a director of Auburn's City National Bank in 1951. The stint also highlighted another of Glenn's qualities: longevity. He served on the board for 36 years—the second longest term in the bank's history.

When Glenn joined the board, two families—the Carpers and Hines—owned most of the bank's stock. A.V. Hines served as chairman of the board and Hugh Carper held the position of president at the bank. When Hines retired in 1969, the board elected Glenn its chairman. Along with an opportunity to serve his community, Glenn received an education that went far beyond columns of numbers. "You made loans to farmers in the spring of the year. Then, when they harvest their crops in the fall, you'd get your money back," said Glenn. The experience left him with a strong faith in truly local banks. "Most of our money was loaned out—not because of a person's assets—but because of the person themselves," said Glenn. "If you're a local bank, you know the people. You know the honest people and who would bend their back to make it right between you."

From 1969 to 1987, Glenn served as president of the board. The close of his term coincided with the board's toughest decisions. "The Carper family wanted to get out from under the bank," Glenn explained. "So in 1987, we sold it to the Lincoln Bank of Fort Wayne." Glenn proved instrumental in the transaction. From 1976 to 1981, he had been a director of Lincoln National. Since he held that bank in high regard also, he encouraged the sale.

Eric serves as bank leader
Eric would follow his father in taking a leadership role in a bank. He was one of the founders of First Community Bank of Fort Wayne.

The changes in ownership that have followed, however, have been painful for Glenn to watch. "The Lincoln Bank then was taken over by Norwest Bank out of Minnesota. Now Norwest Bank has been taken over by Wells Fargo in California," Glenn explained. "So now an Auburn bank is being run by a bank in California. They're a hell of a long ways away from us! What kind of attention are they going to give the little guy who has a damn good reputation but no money? How are they going to be able to help him in the future?"

Flexibility, a hallmark of Glenn's career, was now missing in the bank's relationship with its local customers. Instead of a board of directors discussing a man's personal honor, loans are given based on purely mathematical formulas. Glenn missed the old ways. "We are losing the personal touch a small bank had with the people of a community," he said.

BROADENING HORIZONS

Chapter Nineteen

During the 1950s, Glenn and Thelma's world view expanded. From Cedar Creek Valley Farm they began to travel more frequently and further away. The opportunities which presented themselves and the couple's willingness to pursue them opened a new chapter in their lives.

* * *

In 1950, Glenn and Thelma traveled to England. RMPC had issued a license to Reeds Limited allowing the company to manufacture steel drum closures. The British conglomerate built a factory in Birkenhead and called it ViseGrips Products, Limited. Glenn was needed to oversee equipment setup and work out final details of the contract. He and Thelma cruised to the British Isles on the world's biggest luxury liner, the 1,080-foot, original Queen Elizabeth. The trip offered fine dining and elegant surroundings.

Once at their destination, the vacation ended for Glenn. "We spent five weeks in England," he said. "We had to equip the plant with the proper machinery from the states." Reeds' headquarters were located in the old seaport city of Liverpool. Glenn and Thelma were not impressed with what they saw of the city soon to be famous for its musical export,

Thelma and Glenn dined in luxury aboard the original Queen Elizabeth ocean liner in 1950.

the Beatles. "Liverpool is a dirty town; they call it the Pittsburgh of England," said Glenn. "At that time they were still using horse-drawn wagons pulled by big Perchan horses in their shipping yards." During their extended stay, the Riekes lived in the Adelphia Hotel.

While Glenn wrestled with getting the new plant running, Thelma went sightseeing alone. It was a pattern that would be repeated. "Thelma saw the sights, then I saw them through her eyes later in the hotel room," said Glenn.

For Thelma, the trip proved an eye opener in another sense. She had been very reluctant to leave her boys—at the time, Layden was 12 and Eric 9. But the trip proved she could take a break from motherhood and the boys survived just fine. After this initial trip, Thelma began to accompany Glenn almost regularly. "We sure did enough traveling without the two boys," she said, somewhat in wonder. "Fortunately, we had tenants that lived on the farm. Harry and Mary just moved into our house." Glenn laughed at his wife's discovery of freedom. "She became a hardened traveler!" he noted.

Despite its hopeful beginnings, the business affiliation in England ended in frustration. "At that time, each little European country had its own import and export duties," Glenn explained. "It was very difficult to do business." Most of those problems, Glenn added, have been resolved under the European Free Trade Agreement and its common currency, the Euro. But after seven years, RMPC terminated the Reeds license and set up a warehouse to take the factory's place. "We found it cheaper to make the product here and ship it over," Glenn explained.

Glenn golfs with unique champion

During the Riekes' stay in Liverpool, England, Glenn played golf with a unique champion.

"He was the one-armed champion of England," said Glenn. "He could really hit that ball!"

The man was a hero in more than just the game of golf. "He had only his left arm," Glenn explained. "He lost the other one in the war."

* * *

In November of 1952, Glenn took a less genteel business trip alone. During the Korean War, his services were required in the Bahrain Islands.

"I made the flight in a plane that went from London to Rome, then Rome to Beruit. It was a British Comet, the first commercial jet," Glenn said. He later learned that only three Comets were made—and for good reason. "One crash landed at the Rome Airport the day before we got there," he recalled. "When we arrived, you could still see smoke smoldering from the fire! The crash killed all the people aboard." The day after Glenn arrived in Bahrain, the third Comet—flying the same route Glenn had just traveled—blew up over the Mediterranean Sea. Again, all aboard were lost. "I always considered myself pretty lucky that I picked the right one out of three planes," said Glenn with a shake of his head.

He later learned what caused the Comet's seemingly bad luck. "I was a good friend of the vice president of United Airlines. He taught his younger brother to fly at my airport in Auburn," Glenn explained. "While he was out there one day, I told him about my trip to Bahrain in a British Comet." The man said, "Glenn, I wish I had known you were going to fly on that airplane. I'd never let you get on it. Our boys went and looked that plane over from stem to stern. We decided it was unsafe to fly!" The problem, said the aviation executive, centered on the planes' pressurized cabin. It simply wasn't adequately strong for a vessel which flew up to 41,000 feet above the earth. When air pressure decreased outside, the pressure inside pushed against the jet's too-thin walls and put the vessel in danger of blowing up!

Once safely in Bahrain, Glenn found himself the only guest of Texaco Oil Company's refinery. "They made their own barrels and wanted to equip their factory with dies to install our closures," said Glenn of his mission. He spent a week overseeing the work. Texaco employees lived in a virtual city which they called "The Compound." "Families from all over Europe lived and worked in the plant," said Glenn. "Most of the foremen and top echelon people trained people to run the plant, then they would hire laborers from the island."

Only native sons could withstand the brutal climactic conditions. "When I was there the temperature run about 115 degrees—no air conditioning!" Glenn recalled. "The locals would show up to work wearing a long white sheet. Then, when they'd get into the plant, they'd throw the sheet off and all they'd have on would be a loin cloth around their middle. They worked dressed that way."

Although Glenn refrained from throwing off his western garb, he stumbled one day into sampling local life. "I was settin' dies in one of the presses and they had assigned a fellow to work with me who could speak a little English," Glenn explained. "One day he asked me if I liked dates. I said I did. Well, that was a mistake!" The following day, the man handed Glenn an old, stained paper sack. Glenn didn't fail to notice that the man carried the sack tucked inside the cloth around his waist. "When in Rome, do as the Romans do!" Glenn said with a laugh. "I reluctantly ate the dates. But I was careful about what I said after that!"

During Glenn's visit, two US Naval destroyers tied up to the Texaco docks. They held servicemen involved in the conflict in Korea who were headed home. Texaco officials invited all the ensigns of the ships for dinner. A grand feast was held in the compound's big dining hall.

The evening provided Glenn with several lasting memories. "Being the only other guest on the island, they put me at a long table of about 12 hosted by a Norwegian family that worked at the compound," he recalled. The wife of the host family impressed Glenn when she offered the toast. Reciting from memory, Glenn quoted the woman as saying:

Mein scold, dein scold
Alla vlacka flicka scold

After the dinner ended, Glenn sought out the woman and asked, "What does the toast mean?" She answered,

I scold, you scold
All the beautiful girls scold!

Glenn saw added significance in the toast since it came from the only beautiful woman at the table.

During the course of the dinner, Glenn noticed a young officer glancing his direction. When he could no longer ignore the young man's obvious interest, Glenn asked, "Son, what are you thinking about?" The officer said, "Is your name Rieke?" Taken aback, Glenn said it was and asked, "How do you know me?" The young man said, "My father works for you!" It turned out that halfway around the world Glenn had encountered a soldier who grew up in Garrett, Indiana.

The ensign asked when Glenn would return to the states. When Glenn answered that weekend, the young man quickly said, "Would you mind calling my Mother and Dad and tell them you saw me and I'm well and I'll be home at Christmas?" Glenn remembered replying, "I sure will!" Word spread around the table. Soon a soldier from Kokomo, Indiana, approached Glenn with a similar request. The homesick lads eagerly lapped up news of their home state. Conversation lasted long after dinner. "We ended up in my room that night drinking beer," Glenn recalled.

* * *

Despite TW's death in 1939, Mary Rieke continued to live an active life. In 1943, she married John Greider of Fort Wayne. When Greider passed away in April of 1951, Mary moved into the home Glenn and the family built for her at 1007 Midway Drive.

Mary retained an adventurous spirit throughout her life. Her later years, in fact, were remarkable for the frequency and exotic nature of her travels. "After my father died, she spent quite a bit time traveling," said Glenn. "She'd been to Africa, Alaska and the Hawaiian Islands." The son encouraged his mother's footloose forays. In 1953, he paid for Mary and her friend—Rollie Muhn's wife, Ann—to attend Queen Elizabeth's coronation in England. Mary's love of travel became apparent in the company she kept. "She made a couple of trips to Hawaii and got to know one of the men who ran excursion trips," said Glenn. "She went to Alaska with him. She enjoyed him because he explained where they were, the sights, and so forth."

Mary Rieke had this formal portrait taken at the Wolf & Dessauer store in Fort Wayne. It probably dates from the late 1940s.

Then, at 77 years old, Mary announced she wished to go around the world. Glenn happily made the arrangements. Through American Express, he booked her passage on a Swedish ship in the Kungsholm Line.

To spice up her globe trot, Glenn included side excursions so she could taste the local flavor of places she visited. Mary especially looked forward to one such novelty trip: in India she would ride an elephant! Glenn and Thelma accompanied Mary to New York, saw her onto the ship, and waved good-bye.

Back at home, they read with interest the postcards Mary sent from various ports. But through this bare form of communication, Glenn sensed something was wrong. He noticed his mother made no mention of excursion trips he'd arranged. India came and went, and Mary did not mention an elephant ride.

"Then one Sunday morning, I get a telegram from the American Express man in Singapore," Glenn recalled. "He told us Mother was unconscious when they pulled into the dock and they had taken her off the ship. She was in General Hospital in Singapore and he needed permission immediately from the family for an operation. She had a busted gall bladder!" After learning that the head surgeon was a very capable doctor, Glenn wired back his permission. Then he immediately called Irvin in Montana. "You're closer then I am," Glenn said to his brother. "Why don't you run over to Singapore and see how Mom's gettin' along?"

Mary bowled and played bridge

Despite her quiet deference to TW in family decisions, Mary Rieke owned her own mind. Her independence became apparent when, after age 60, she took up a new sport.

"Thelma and I bowled quite a bit after Dad died," said Glenn. "Mother went up to the bowling alley with us one evening and suddenly said, 'I'd like to do that too!'" Glenn bought Mary a bowling ball which she used until the end of her life.

For more conventional senior citizen recreation, Mary joined the Best Yet Club. The women members met once a week to play bridge.

As Irvin rushed to the other side of the world, Glenn kept in touch with the American Express representative. He learned his mother was experiencing hallucinations. Convinced she was hospitalized in a backward, primitive facility in Africa, she refused to take her medicine from a nurse of color. Much of the time she floated in and out of consciousness. The doctors didn't know what to do.

Then Irvin arrived. According to Glenn, his brother walked in the room and Mary immediately came to her senses. "Irvin, what are you doing here?" she said. It was the first lucid moment she'd had in several days. After that, her recovery sped along.

The family finally learned what had happened. The first night out of New York, heavy storms rocked the ship. As Mary walked downstairs between decks, she tripped, fell and broke her pelvic bone. A party of Indiana residents—including, Paul McNutt, then governor of the state—was on board and immediately assumed Mary's care. They wished to send her back home, but Mary insisted on continuing. When the ship's doctor said he could care for her injuries, the group gave in to Mary's request. Mary kept her family from worrying by never mentioning her fall or the wheelchair she used to get around. Instead, her postcards home boasted of the fine trip she was having.

After Irvin arrived, Mary came close to being her old self. Soon Irvin would push her wheelchair outdoors for walks. After about a week, the doctor said, "I think she's capable of flying back home." Throughout Mary's ordeal, the Kungsholm Line proved compassionate and caring. The company even provided a full-time nurse to accompany Mary home.

Irvin bought tickets aboard an old four-engine, propeller-driven Pan American Airways "Clipper Ship" airplane with two decks. The deck below held a barroom; on the upper deck, passengers could sleep and eat. At the plane's first stop in Manila, Mary was full of her characteristic spunk. "How long we going to be here?" she asked. When the steward replied an hour, Mary asked to get off the plane. Irvin took her by wheelchair to a nearby building with a bar. Mary rested over a bottle of beer before boarding the plane for the next leg of the trip.

After a stop in Guam, the plane continued towards Wake Island in the middle of the vast Pacific Ocean. About midway through the flight, Irvin walked to the lower deck to enjoy a cigar. Suddenly, the Kungsholm nurse appeared. "Irvin!" she said, "your mother appears to be having a heart attack!" Irvin rushed upstairs. Two doctors on board the plane were ministering to his mother. One of the physicians gave Mary a pill and the crisis seemed to pass.

The pilot of the plane then asked to meet with Irvin and the doctors. "The doctors say there's not much they can do for your mother," the pilot said to Irvin, "but I want you to know we are coming to a point of no-return. At Wake Island, there are no hospital facilities. On the other hand, back in Guam, they have good facilities. If you say the word, we'll turn around and go back to Guam." Irvin asked for a moment alone with the doctors. One of them said, "Mr. Rieke, I don't think it's necessary to turn around. They can't do any more for her in Guam than we can do for her right here." With that, Irvin told the pilot to continue toward Wake Island.

An hour later, Irvin again went below for a smoke. Again, the nurse came rushing down. "Irvin, your mother wants to see you right away!" Irvin hurried upstairs. He found the doctors attempting to make his mother more comfortable. They offered to fashion a bed in which she could lie down, but Mary brushed the suggestion aside. Then she said to her son, "Irvin, I think I'm dying!" Those were her last words. Mary (Rathert) Rieke died March 14, 1955, high above the Pacific Ocean.

The plane landed on Wake Island. Mary's body was placed in a casket provided by the local Naval base. Irvin accompanied his mother's body as the plane continued to Hawaii. After making arrangements for a Hawaiian mortuary to transport the body to Chicago, he flew home alone.

Glenn and Thelma had to be tracked down to be given the news. They had undertaken a winter cruise with William K. Schaab—a member of RMPC's board of directors since 1930—and his wife. Word reached the vacationers at St. Thomas of the Virgin Islands.

A month or more after Mary's funeral, Glenn was surprised to receive a letter from Pan American. It contained a check for $1,700. The airline was refunding a portion of Mary's fare, based on the moment she died over the Pacific. A week later, Glenn got a letter from the Kungsholm Line. They sent a refund for the return ocean liner trip Mary never made.

Although saddened by his mother's passing, Glenn never regretted the way she bid good-bye to life. "She saw the world right up to her last day," he said. "She was doing what she wanted to do!"

* * *

An unexpected happenstance placed the Riekes in the audience of an historical event.

In 1956, Glenn received a call from Hal Hoham, an Auburn grain and feed dealer and DeKalb County Republican political leader. Hoham explained that the Fourth District delegate to the National Republican Convention—a man from Avilla–couldn't fulfill his commitment. "Would you take the job?" Hoham asked. Although Glenn had never gotten deeply involved in politics even at the local level, he thought the trip might be fun. He agreed to serve.

Glenn and Thelma arrived at the Auburn depot to find a special six-car train reserved exclusively for the Indiana delegation. The Republican Hoosiers already knew that the immensely popular incumbent president, Dwight D. Eisenhower, would be the party's nomination. With the pressure off, the delegates boarded the train to San Francisco ready for fun. As they found their seats, Hoham—who made all the traveling arrangements—arrived at Glenn's elbow and said, "Glenn, we're going to be right where the action is!" The Riekes didn't realize how literally he meant those words.

The train stopped in South Bend and picked up George N. Craig, Indiana's governor at the time. In Chicago, the train got on the Southern Pacific line and started the long haul west.

When bed time arrived, Glenn and Thelma learned about the "action" Hoham had alluded to. All of the 70-plus delegates had been assigned sleeping cars. Everyone, that is, except the Riekes and the Hohams. The two couples would share quarters in the middle car that also served as the delegation's general meeting, entertainment and recreation area! On a typical night during the 2 1/2-day trip, the delegates and their spouses met in the chair car to play cards, smoke and drink. When the last of the die-hard revelers trudged off to bed, the Riekes and Hohams could finally turn in. "You made your bed by pulling the seats down into a flat position," said Glenn. "It was fairly comfortable, but you were laying out in the middle of an open room!" He laughed. "We were where the action was all right—it was like sleeping in a barroom! But we had a lot of fun."

Accommodations for the Riekes improved when the delegation reached San Francisco and checked into the Top of the Mark Hotel, named because it sat high on one of the city's famous hills.

Glenn and Thelma knew San Francisco fairly well, since RMPC had its West Coast office there for several years. But the convention itself provided lots of new experiences. Large-scale meetings were held in the "Cow Palace," a famous San Francisco convention hall. "There was a lot of fanfare, a lot of patting on the back," Glenn recalled. The bulk of the action took place during the actual voting. "When the roll count was held, someone from our group would have to get up and read off the number of votes we had," said Glenn. Since the results for Eisenhower were so predictable, the novelty of the convention soon wore off. "After a couple of days of it, it got to be old stuff," Glenn said. "It wasn't a hotly contested convention like some of them."

Glenn's most memorable moment of the convention came when he shook the President's hand. "He was tall, but not too big," Glenn recalled. "I'd say he was six feet or a little better and walked very erect. He was sharp and alert." Eisenhower's demeanor impressed Glenn more than his physical presence. "He was a very impressive fellow, a down-to-earth guy, reserved, soft-spoken," said Glenn, searching for words. "He was not a politician—you could tell that. He was made president because people were grateful for his service to the country."

Riekes knew Ike's church

Dwight Eisenhower lived his later years in Palm Springs, California. Glenn and Thelma, who bought a vacation home nearby, well knew the church he attended.

"We went to the same Presbyterian church that Eisenhower used to go to," said Glenn. "A pew had a name plate on it, to show where Eisenhower sat. We sat there many times."

After five or six days of convention, the Indiana delegates once again boarded their special train. For the ride back home, Hoham had arranged a treat. The train would first travel north for a sightseeing excursion through the Canadian Rockies. "We went up to Seattle and into Canada to Vancouver," Glenn explained. "Then we stopped in Banff, near Calgary, Alberta, and stayed overnight."

At Banff, Glenn went into town and bought a case of Crown Royal whiskey. He knew custom laws made it illegal for liquor to be brought across the U.S. border, but he thought the Canadian price—sans the American liquor tax—made it worth his while to try. When he brought the box onto the train, Hoham stopped him. "What are you going to do with that?" Hal asked. "I'm going to take it home with me!" Glenn replied. Hal shook his head. "You're going to have trouble getting into the states with it." "Let's worry about that when we come to it," Glenn answered.

The same porters who had been on the trip to San Francisco accompanied the delegates back home. After spending day and night with the Hoosiers, they knew the passengers quite well. Glenn had struck up a light-hearted relationship with one old porter, a black man. "Don't you have a locker?" Glenn asked the porter as he held the box of whiskey. "Oh, Mr. Rieke," the porter said. "I don't want that box in my locker. I don't want to be around it!" "Just put it in your locker and, when the revenuers go through the train, you just bring it to me," said Glenn. "You'll have nothing to do with it." The porter reluctantly agreed.

As they had throughout the trip, a group of men in the delegation spent the long travel hours playing cards. Since there was no seat at the end of the table, Glenn made it his custom to sit in the aisle on one of his suitcases. He was in his favorite spot when the train crossed the American border and rolled into Minneapolis. When the train came to a stop, the old porter tapped Glenn on the shoulder. "Mr. Rieke," he said. "The inspectors are getting on the train now." "Okay," said Glenn, standing up. He handed the porter the suitcase. "Put this in your locker and bring me the case." The porter obeyed. Glenn again sat down, this time on the full box of whiskey bottles. Glenn laughed as he recalled the porter's reaction. "He just shook his head as he was going out the aisle."

With the porter watching from a safe distance, the customs inspector entered the car. Glenn and his friends continued their game of cards as if nothing were up. "Of course," Glenn said with a laugh, "I'm blocking the aisle so he can't get through." The inspector stopped to watch the game. "Well, boys, having fun?" he asked. "Yeah, lot of fun," said Glenn, never giving up his seat. The clock ticked, the men kept up their easy banter. The inspector simply stood there. Finally, he turned to Glenn and said, "If you'll excuse me, I think I'll keep on going with my rounds." Glenn smiled at the sweet memory of the moments that followed. "So I stood up, he stepped over the case of liquor and walked on down the aisle!" Glenn said.

The whiskey and the travelers made it safely home.

* * *

As the Rieke family broadened their horizons, so did RMPC.

After Truman Floyd initiated contact, the company began selling closures to PEMEX, the government-run oil industry in Mexico. But the Mexican government chafed at having an American company—which provided jobs for American workers—manufacture products used by the national oil company. The government began to make inquiries whether RMPC would be willing to build a factory in Mexico.

After a series of negotiations, a deal was struck. In February of 1957, Glenn flew 1,800 air miles down to Mexico City. He selected and bought property, then hired a contractor. On May 24, construction of a manufacturing plant began.

In RMPC's home plant in Auburn, Glenn set up an additional assembly line to make Rieke closures. A Mexican native chosen to manage the plant south of the border then visited Auburn for an extended stay. Glenn taught the man how to turn out products on the new assembly line. By the end of his lessons, the Mexican manager was running all operations in this factory-within-a-factory.

As summer came to a close, construction on the Mexican plant came to a conclusion. Auburn workers disassembled and loaded into boxcars the assembly line on which the Mexican manager learned his trade. As the train transported the equipment south, Glenn and the manager flew ahead. Once on location, they hired 18 local, single Mexican men. "They were tickled to death to get a job with an American company," Glenn reported. "Most of the industry in Mexico is run by Spaniards, who treat Mexicans like dogs. So our workers were more than happy to get a job with us!" Throughout fall, the new hirees installed equipment. By the end of October, the plant—known as Rieke De Mexico—started production. Glenn left, the plant saying, "I'm coming back in February to see how you're getting along!"

Glenn kept his promise and what he found set him back on his heels. "I walked in and these young fellows said, 'Hello, Mr. Rieke'—in English!" I walked around a little, looked at the time cards—they were in English! I went to the manager upstairs and said, 'What's going on here? When I hired these boys, they couldn't speak a word of English!'" The manager replied, "These young men so appreciated the fact you built this factory and gave them a job that they decided they had to speak your language. They asked me if I would teach them English. So, for two nights a week, all winter long, on their personal time, they voluntarily took English lessons. They even talk English with each other in the plant." More than 40 years later, Glenn still couldn't fathom the Mexican workers' dedication. "Can you imagine a bunch of American boys having a Spaniard build a plant and have the workers learn Spanish?" he asked. "The American boys wouldn't think of it! They'd go somewhere else to work. But down there, they love the opportunity to work for an American company."

Nor was the gratitude short-lived.

The fact that a larger Rieke de Mexico plant was needed by 1967 served as proof that RMPC's early gamble in international business had paid off. The photo above shows the second plant as it looked in January of 1981.

The Mexican plant workers married, had families, bought homes—all while continuing to work for Rieke De Mexico. Some advanced to take leadership positions as foremen or supervisors. Most spent their whole careers with the company. Throughout the decades, they remembered Glenn and Thelma for their role in developing the plant. "Every year for 25 years, we'd go back in late January or early February for a corporate meeting," Glenn remembered. "The workers would know when we was coming and would clear out the shipping room to make a dance floor. They'd hire a mariachi band. Then they'd set up tables of hors D'oeuvres and drinks. The employees wouldn't let the company spend a dime. They wanted to entertain Thelma and I. It was really a pleasure to go down there!"

Along with gratitude, the Mexican operation paid RMPC generously in profit. Ten years after the original plant was built, a larger facility replaced it. Today, the plant employs nearly 200 workers. "In other words," said Glenn. "we done in 1957 what most companies are starting to do now—building plants in foreign countries."

The analogy ends there since RMPC didn't make its original move south for economic reasons. "Our plant here in the states was automated to the extent that we could make a product cheaper than they could, even with their cheap labor," Glenn explained. "But they wanted work for their people, which I don't blame them."

By following its people-based philosophy, RMPC was repaid in dividends that couldn't be counted in dollars.

* * *

In 1958, the year after establishing Rieke de Mexico, Glenn turned his eyes northward. Following the previously set pattern, RMPC started a plant in Brampton, Ontario, Canada, about 20 miles outside of Toronto. Once again, Glenn selected and bought land and oversaw construction of a factory. Rieke Canada, Limited, began production before the year was out.

This operation, however, didn't fare as well as its southern sister. "When the North American Free Trade Agreement went into effect about two years ago, it worked in reverse for us," Glenn explained. "Other companies began to build outside the US to take advantage of cheap labor. But NAFTA also took away import duties we had to pay to transport our product across the border. "We found we could make the product cheaper at home, so we closed the Canadian plant and only have an office and warehouse there."

* * *

Through the struggle of World War II and its after effects, RMPC grew smarter, stronger and more competitive. The war provided the impetus and means to mechanize. Want of skilled workers produced a need to do more with less hands. Large government orders and incentive programs provided capital for buying infrastructure.

First, brand new machinery replaced TW's worn-out, inefficient, scrap-heap orphans. Then ever-increasing demand prompted the purchase of more and more machinery. The sum

Flying high like their father

Following in their father's footsteps, both Layden and Eric became Boy Scouts.

Not only did the Rieke boys take part, they excelled. Both earned the BSA's highest honor, attaining the rank of Eagle Scout.

In the photo, Layden stands at left during his Eagle Scout presentation.

One leader honors another

In 1958, Glenn and Thelma accompanied Eric to the Boy Scout's annual jamboree, held that year in Valley Forge Memorial Park, about 27 miles northwest of Philadelphia.

Over the winter of 1777-1778, General George Washington and his defeated, discouraged American troops camped in Valley Forge. The miserable weather, lack of food, and very real possibility of defeat at the hands of the British tested Washington's leadership and the soldiers' dedication to their cause.

The history of the setting, his own belief in Scouting ideals, and watching his son grow up to share those values made Valley Forge a memorable time for Glenn.

At the time of the Valley Forge jamboree, Glenn served as chairman for DeKalb and Steuben counties in the BSA's Anthony Wayne Council, headquartered in Fort Wayne.

result of modernization: improved quality and increased capacity.

But Glenn didn't stop there. He continually sought ways to reduce production steps. Although TW's original design principals survived intact, the method by which RMPC closures were manufactured and installed went through numerous mutations. In TW's time, a punch press operator needed three separate steps to place a Rieke closure in an oil barrel. During the war, Glenn reduced the process to just two steps.

Prepared for War

Because of the problems RMPC had getting its civilian customers back after World War II , one might think the company would dread another war. But when the U.S. government asked RMPC if it would make Jerry Can closures during the Korean Conflict, Glenn didn't hesitate.

The reason? Preparation.

"This time, we were prepared not only to supply the government, but our regular customers as well," said Glenn. Equipment improvements made during World War II and further mechanization following it had put the company in fighting trim.

Mechanization put more control in managers' hands and improved quality. It put space between RMPC and its competitors. In sum, it helped the company's bottom line.

Glenn, for his part, enjoyed the challenges. "Mechanizing the plant was fun for me—to see a machine operating without somebody running it—because every time we took one employee off the line, that meant he was free to do another task!" he said.

HIGHS and LOWS

Chapter Twenty

During the 1960s and 1970s, America went through a period of self-reckoning. The nation took on the personality of a young adult, one moment deadly serious and passionate, the next carefree and frivolous. Old, accepted ways of doing things were scrutinized and many of them rejected. In the economy of ideas, new ways were cheap, for they were plentiful and many of them useless. Yet a precious few new ways were polished and have since become so accepted it's hard to imagine society without them.

It was a painful time. Faced with new fighting, the generation that guided the nation through World War II clashed with its children. Social barriers were assaulted and forced the nation to take a painful look at itself. Important leaders died violently, another resigned in disgrace, shaking the foundations of democracy.

It was a wonderful time. Freed from old constraints, imaginations and spirits soared to new heights. The first glimpse of a Constitution that fully lived up to its lofty ideals raised hope. Limits on happiness and dreams fell away and their boundaries have yet to be found.

The Riekes, as always, experienced the times to the fullest. They felt fear as

Layden and Eric served in Vietnam. They enjoyed success as the family business broke boundaries. They watched old ways pass away as they relinquished control of the business. And, through its sale, they found the freedom of financial independence.

For Glenn and Thelma, these twenty years were a time of highs and lows.

* * *

Around 1960, Thelma learned to fly. "She did a lot of flying with me and, for her own peace of mind, she wanted a little knowledge of flying in case anything ever happened," explained Glenn.

Having another pilot in the family proved disquieting at first. One Saturday afternoon, Glenn left work at his desk and headed to the airport. He'd had a hard week at RMPC and felt a need to get away. A few hours in the air would do just the trick. As he walked up a ramp in front of the hangar, Glenn noticed Dick Fink and Don Allison standing there, talking. They greeted Glenn and asked what he intended to do. "I thought I might get my airplane out and fly a little bit," said Glenn. "You're going to have trouble doing that," Dick replied. When Glenn asked why, the men pointed into the air. "There was three light airplanes flying around," said Glenn, describing the sight. "One was Gloria Fink, one was Fran Allison, and one was Thelma. All three of our wives had our airplanes up in the sky. We were grounded!"

Layden and Eric earned their pilots license while still teenagers. The wisdom of having another qualified pilot on board paid dividends when Eric accompanied his father on a trip to San Antonio. "On the way home, we landed in Memphis to go to a restaurant and I must have ate something bad," Glenn recalled. "When we got back on the airplane, I got sick. So I went and laid down and said to Eric, 'You fly on into Auburn and when we get there, I'll land.' So that's what we did!"

The dangers of flying in small aircraft always hung over the Rieke's heads. Glenn and Thelma experienced their share of exciting moments.

Perhaps the most dramatic took place during a return business flight from Guatemala City on February 4, 1967. Glenn and Thelma, Irvin and Hilda, Jim and Joan Eyster, and Don Wade were on board with Irvin in the pilot's seat. When approaching a landing at Tapachula, Mexico, Irvin flipped switches to lower the landing gear. A green light indicating the nose wheel was in place illuminated, as did the light for the wheel on the right wing. But the light for the left wheel stayed dark. "We didn't know whether it was a malfunction of the light or if the wheel really hadn't come down," said Glenn. Irvin flew by the airport tower several times and asked by radio if air traffic controllers could see the left wheel in place. "But this was in Mexico about one o'clock in the afternoon," Glenn said with a shrug. "Everybody was taking a siesta, including the tower men!" A low fuel supply prevented returning to Mexico City's larger airport, so Irvin decided to take his chances and put the plane down.

"Well, the light was telling the truth," said Glenn. "That wheel wasn't down!" Glenn praised his brother's skill in landing the plane on just two wheels. "He held it up as long as he could," Glenn said, "but finally the plane went down and, of course, ruined the props on that side." Although it made it to the ground in one piece, the plane still hadn't come to a stop. The passengers experienced their most anxious moments when the plane cartwheeled and landed awkwardly on some grass. “Suddenly everything inside just got black,” said Glenn. “We thought the airplane was on fire. You couldn’t see out of the windows, everything was dark as night!”

The passengers were relieved to find their worst fears weren’t true. “What happened was, they had just burned that field off and it was covered with black soot,” Glenn explained. “That soot formed a cloud that come right around the airplane.” Despite all the excitement, no one was hurt.

Glenn was the co-pilot when Irvin crash-landed the RMPC plane at Tapachula, Mexico. Not one of the seven people on board was hurt.

* * *

Throughout its mechanical adaptations and international expansion, RMPC remained strictly a closure company into the 1960s. Glenn would change that. “I wanted to expand our product line,” he said. “Other companies had invented attachments to go on our closures, such as little pumps and pour spouts. I figured we could make them just as well.” From a marketing perspective, adding closure accessories to the product line made perfect sense. “The customers for these products were the same people we called on to sell our product!” Glenn explained.

When opportunity presented itself in 1961, Glenn bought the Multi-Meter Company of Toledo. “They made a pour spout for drums and little hand pumps for pumping fluid out of a barrel,” Glenn explained. “The man who owned the company had a handful of people working for him, along with a couple of injection molding machines.” After finalizing the purchase, Glenn sold the company’s Toledo building and moved Multi-Meter’s equipment, operation and most of its personnel to Auburn. The Multi-Meter Division of RMPC was set up in its own area inside the company’s Auburn complex. Glenn named Don Kelly the new subsidiary’s first general manager.

In 1970, Glenn initiated the purchase of Fort Wayne’s Oren-Van Aman Co., a wholesale distributor of industrial tools and supplies. The business began as Auburn Supply Company in the basement of H. Gerald “Jerry” Oren’s home in 1946. Oren was a community leader—he served as mayor of Auburn from 1952 to 1964—and he and Glenn were friends. After the sale, Oren stayed connected to the company. Through terms of the deal, he stayed on as manager of RMPC’s newest division.

Glenn didn't buy Oren-Van Aman just to keep its wheels turning. "We added a plant in Indianapolis and another operation at Muncie," he said. The company performed adequately, but not to RMPC's expectations. "We had to satisfy ourselves with two or three percent profit, instead of 15 percent at the parent company," Glenn explained.

The acquisitions and new products emphasized that times were changing. In 1965, the RMPC board of directors decided the corporate name—Rieke Metal Products Corporation—was a misnomer. The FlexSpout and other plastic products were responsible for the largest portion of the company's growth. The new subsidiaries further had broadened the company's product line.

Legal steps were taken to change the name. On January 26, 1966, the Indiana Secretary of State officially recognized the newly named Rieke Corporation.

* * *

Except for short-term exceptions during the union's reign, RC enjoyed an excellent relationship with its employees. "I would call the workers by their first name and I insisted they call me 'Glenn,' not 'Mr. Rieke,'" remembered Glenn. "We had probably 250 people working and I could call every one of them by their first names. I knew their families and made a practice of trying to find out a little about each individual employee."

Glenn inherited his philosophy of treating all people as equals from his father. TW developed his philosophy partly as a result of his own experience as a worker. As a very young man in one of his first jobs, TW told a boss he was quitting to go across the street to try for a better position. Instead of reacting angrily, the boss calmly told the young man to go ahead and investigate the other opportunity—on company time, no less—but to keep his current position just in case. TW took the walk. In a short while, he sheepishly returned and went back to his original job. He never forgot his boss's kind, human touch.

Mahlon would follow his father and brother's lead as well. During his reign as RC president (1966-1980), he institutionalized fair treatment. The board of directors had been bothered that only one class of workers—those in the production line—were forced to use a time clock. It seemed degrading, as if

Mahlon built boats and led Rieke

Mahlon Rieke, Glenn's younger brother, had a variety of experiences before making a career in the family company.

In 1939, right after his Purdue graduation, Mahlon joined RMPC as an engineer. Then with the outbreak of World War II, he joined the Marines.

After his military service ended, Mahlon returned to Auburn. In a small factory named Vanguard Power Boats, he began to pursue his passion of designing and building high-octane water craft. In one of his most famous projects, Mahlon restored a Hackercraft "Rum Runner." The boat had been used during Prohibition to race liquor across Lake Erie from Canada to America. Mahlon found it stored in a barn near Detroit, where it had sat since Congress's repeal made it's highly-specialized design obsolete.

In the mid-1950s, the boat business sunk. As Glenn recalled, "I finally got Mahlon to come over and help me."

Mahlon stepped up the RMPC ladder, serving as assistant sales manager and executive vice president. Then in 1966, Glenn stepped over to serve as chairman of the board and Mahlon assumed the presidency of Rieke Corp. He continued in that position until his retirement in 1980, two years after his family sold the business to Masco.

Mahlon passed away in 1992.

they couldn't be trusted to keep track of their hours while the rest of the workers could. Mahlon made a radical suggestion: simply get rid of time clocks! The company did and—to no one's surprise—efficiency on the work line increased. In the morning, employees regularly showed up early. At 5 p.m., they no longer rushed from their machines, but stayed to clean their work area. The big picture also improved. Employees replaced the pronoun "them" with "we" when talking about the company.

Glenn's smoking era ends

During his college days at Purdue, Glenn began smoking a pipe. The habit followed him for 35 years until an off-hand bet brought that chapter of his life to a close.

By about 1965, pipes had lost their appeal. "I got lazy and a pipe smoker can't get lazy," Glenn explained. "He's got to keep his pipes clean or the smoke gets strong." In August of that year, Bob South–then president of the Messenger Corporation–decided to include Glenn in South's attempt to kick a tobacco habit. "We were in the dining room at the *Plantation* playing penny ante poker," remembered Glenn. "I was smoking my pipe and Bob was smoking cigarettes." At that opportune moment, South turned to Glenn and said, "I'll bet you $100 I can quit smoking if you quit!" Glenn was up to the challenge—on one condition. "Fine," he said. "But if you want to smoke, you'll gladly pay $100. So let's make it $1,000!"

Both men kept up their end of the bargain into the holiday season. Then, a few days before Christmas, Glenn received an urgent call. "Glenn, would it make any difference to you if we just call that bet off?" South said. "I'm going nuts!" Glenn took a philosophical stance. "Bob, it don't make much difference to me," he answered. "I've quit and I'm going stay off of it, so I've accomplished what I wanted to."

South did not. "The next time I saw him," said Glenn, "he had a cigarette in his mouth!"

An event in stark contrast to the Rieke philosophy convinced Glenn that his brother made the right move. A preacher from southern Indiana called Glenn one day not long after the new policy had been instituted. "Mr. Rieke," the holy man said, "I've been reading in the Indianapolis Star your story about taking time clocks out of your plant. I was wondering if you still had the clocks and, if so, would you like to sell them?" Glenn replied, "I think we've got them yet, but we don't want to sell them. They're kind of momentos. What did you want them for?" The pastor answered, "I wanted to install them in the vestibule of my church. If church members punch a card, it would show they was at church." Glenn was disgusted at the minister's attitude. "I never sent the clocks to him," Glenn said. "He missed the point entirely!"

When barriers to relationships are removed, good will flows both ways. Glenn noted that, over the years, RC's work force "worked wonders" when called on in times of crisis. In response, employees showed the Riekes they appreciated being considered a part of the company rather than just employees. "I can still walk through the plant today and women will throw their arms around me," said Glenn. "It makes you feel good!"

* * *

The Vietnam War deeply affected the Rieke family. To maintain control of their destinies, both Layden and Eric enlisted in the Air Force. Layden joined right after graduating from the University of Tampa and was assigned to Tan Son Nhut Air Base near Saigon, South Vietnam. Although the armed forces discouraged brothers serving together, Eric hoped to get in alongside Layden. He enlisted right out of

McIntosh High School, but failed his physical (he had injured his knee playing basketball and developed a sports-related hernia). During his brother's overseas stint, Eric went to work at RC, but he kept a careful watch on the war and his draft status. Just a few short months after Layden returned home, Eric became convinced he had better enlist again rather than take a chance on what the draft might deal him. So, after having an operation to correct his hernia, he visited the Air Force office. This time examiners never mentioned his injured knee and he joined the war effort. Ironically, Eric drew an assignment at Tan Son Nhut Air Base!

Despite Eric's new address half a world away, Glenn and Thelma dropped in for a visit. "In 1969, Thelma and I went to Japan for a business trip," Glenn explained. "We had been down through Indonesia, over to Singapore and Hong Kong. From there we were going to Manila." The war was in its "Vietnamization" phase. Newly-elected President Richard M. Nixon, in response to American disaffection with the monetary and human cost of the war, had announced troop withdrawals. In other words, America would pull out of Vietnam and the US-backed South Vietnam government would have to pick up the slack.

Since they were in the neighborhood, Glenn decided to try to contact Eric. "While we were in Hong Kong, we went down to the USO and asked if we could talk to our son in Vietnam," Glenn said, picking up the story. "They said we could try, so they put a call through." Eric was overjoyed to hear from his parents. With them relatively close, he made a surprising suggestion. "Why don't you stop here and see us, Dad?" Eric asked. Glenn remembered replying, "Can we?"

Eric went to work. Using an itinerary his father provided, he checked on commercial flights coming into Vietnam. When Glenn and Thelma arrived in Manila, they found a letter from Eric. The note offered a choice of three different flights into the war area and one warning: "I wouldn't advise you take the Vietnam line because its reputation is not too good," Eric wrote. Glenn further investigated and found only the Vietnam line fit his and Thelma's schedule. "We would get into Tan Son Nhut Air Base about 10 o'clock in the morning and this same plane went on to Singapore about 7 o'clock that evening. It worked out just right!" he recalled. "So I called them and asked for seats for two people into Vietnam on Sunday morning."

The flight of dubious repute started off with a jolt of culture shock. "We got on this plane and we were the only

War affected families

As through history, war played havoc with individual families. Luckily for the Riekes, the long separations produced only curious quirks.

During his time overseas, Layden's wife, Suzan, stayed with her parents in North Dakota. At the time Layden left, the family included five-month-old son, Steven. But a baby had been conceived just before he left. When Layden returned, he had a new daughter, five-month-old Lara.

Eric's first wife, Nancy, was able to travel to Hong Kong in 1969 while he was stationed at Tan Son Nhut Air Base. Eric wrangled two weeks off and met his wife in the city. The happy reunion had predictable results: Jennifer was born nine months later.

To tell family and friends of the birth, Eric and Nancy had announcements printed. Stamped across the face of the cards were four red-ink words: "Made in Hong Kong."

Americans," Glenn explained. "It was hot as blazes and Thelma had a fur jacket she was carrying. The rest of the passengers were all Vietnamese people—very little people. They came up to my shoulders, most of them. So we really stood out."

Sticking out in the crowd would be the least of their problems. As the DC-3 approached Tan Son Nhut, the pilot bypassed the landing strip. Thelma remembered the fright of the next few moments. "He pointed the nose almost straight up and took off again. You were laying down with your feet above your head!" The pilot came on the intercom and said: "Sorry, folks. We have to stay on a straight line or they'll shoot at us. We can't take a chance." On the second landing attempt, the passengers saw a fighter plane burning on the runway. It had crashed just moments before! Once again, the pilot pulled the plane hard into the sky. The third time proved the charm and the plane landed. It taxied to within 100 feet of the air base's administration building.

Despite their adventures getting in, Glenn and Thelma knew as soon as they stepped off the plane they had made the right choice in visiting. "There our son was up on top deck waving at us," said Glenn. "He was pretty homesick and glad to see us!"

The Riekes hadn't cleared all obstacles yet, however. As they walked into the office carrying their luggage, an Air Force officer confronted them. "What are you doing here?" the officer demanded. Glenn replied: "We just stopped to see our son." The officer turned to Thelma. "There's no place for a woman to stay here." Glenn assured the officer that he and Thelma would be leaving on an evening flight. Despite their assurances, the officer seemed unsure what to do next—he had never dealt with this situation before! Finally, he shook his head and gave in. Glenn and Thelma received permission to leave their luggage in an office and went to meet Eric.

Rieke family had area covered

Against their wishes, Layden and Eric Rieke did not get to spend their military service time together. Layden's one-year hitch Tan Son Nhut Air Base ended in mid-December of 1967. Eric started his Air Force service at the same base in May of 1969

But during Layden's time overseas, three Riekes served within just a few miles of each other. Mahlon's son, Rick, was serving in the infantry about 30 miles from Tan Son Nhut. Irvin's son, Ted, worked flying C-123 cargo and rescue planes out of Hanoi.

Their son had borrowed his commanding officer's jeep for the day. Eric used the vehicle to provide his parents with a tour of the airfield. At the servicemen's barracks, Eric asked his mother to wait outside. Glenn went in for a quick look at how his son lived. "There was only one person in there, a black man from Alabama. He had the bunk below Eric," said Glenn. When Eric introduced his father, the southern serviceman said in a thick southern drawl, "Boss, you pulled a fust (first). You're the only parents that ever stopped at Tan Son Nhut Air Base to see their boy!"

After the bunkhouse tour, Eric had to turn in the Jeep. Eight more hours remained to his parents' visit. He asked what they wanted to do next. "Can we go into town?" asked Glenn. Eric said they could get a local taxi to take them the 10 miles into Saigon. Before they did so, though, he administered another warning: "If the taxi stops for any reason whatsoever, get out and walk away!" Glenn asked why. Eric explained: "They have trouble with North Vietnamese soldiers filtering down south. They pose as cab drivers and attempt to ambush Americans. First, they'll test you. They'll get off the main route to see if you know where you're going. Or, if they see a car or van that looks like it's got some high muckity, muck people in it, they'll wipe it with a machine gun!"

On that cheery note, the American tourists and their serviceman son went looking for a cab. "They were more or less lined up along the road," remembered Glenn. "We took the first one, an old French Renault." Eric sat in the front seat, Glenn and Thelma climbed in back. The ride wouldn't last long. "We hadn't gone 100 yards when a couple big Gendarmes (the Vietnamese police called "White Mice" by US servicemen because of their white uniforms) waved the driver out of the cab," said Glenn. "The police come around the side door, grabbed him and dragged him out on the street." The Riekes didn't wait for an explanation. Eric said, "Open the doors and out! GO!" The family scrambled for safety. They never did learn what caused the cab driver's apprehension.

A block further down the road, when their hearts had returned somewhat to normal, they decided to try a second cab. The driver of this car proved safe, but the vehicle itself didn't make any promises. "This taxi was the most dilapitious car you ever saw in your life!" said Glenn. "It looked like it had laid in a junkyard for a year." Glenn and Thelma sat on a board which served as the backseat. They watched in amazement how the driver improvised with his well-worn equipment. "There was no door handles or locks—the doors wouldn't stay closed," Glenn explained. "So the driver had a ring in the ceiling and a rope that come from each back door, up through the ring and down to a hook on the dashboard. When he pulled that rope, the doors closed. To open the doors, he'd take the rope off the hook. It worked all right."

Airmen treasured time in Tokyo

Eric's assignment allowed him regular trips to Tokyo. As soldiers will, he treasured the trips to a civilized city outside the war zone. The assignment wasn't dangerous, but it involved some intrigue. All the airmen who undertook it agreed to keep a secret.

"I worked at base supply as a computer operator," Eric explained. "You had to backup that old computer on tape every night." Technology of the time would amuse today's hackers, said Eric. A modern laptop's computing power could blow away the Air Force computers of the time, even though they filled an entire room!

Eric's duties included another bit of old computer lore lost to history: he and his colleagues had to clean computer tapes. "Well, the closest place you could clean them was Tokyo," Eric said. "So about every six weeks, somebody carried 36 computer tapes to Tokyo."

To erase the tapes took all of six hours, according to Eric. But the servicemen who handled the job passed along some sage advice. "Don't come back for 10 days," Eric remembered being told. "Don't ruin it for the next guy!"

The Riekes found the city of Saigon equally strange and fascinating. "The traffic was absolutely amazing!" said Glenn. "Everything that would run was running: bicycles, motorcycles, and rickshaws. Army trucks would have their horns blowing and go through the roadway while everything scattered out of the way." Unlike America where rules regulate traffic flow, Vietnam traffic traveled unhindered by restrictions. "There isn't a right side or a left side of a street," Glenn marveled. "Everybody drove wherever they could find a space, from sidewalk to sidewalk." Nor were the walkways safe. "If something got in the way, they drove up on the sidewalk and went on!" said Glenn.

At traffic lights, tension built as an unregulated mass of vehicles accumulated on opposite sides of a street. "They all try to get to the front of the line," said Glenn. "They fill the street solid, even on the sidewalks." Each side leaned forward in anticipation of the signal change. "You wondered how they're ever going to get by each other," said Glenn. Then the light turned. "Here come this mass towards you! Every means of conveyance!" Glenn shook his head and chuckled. "But somehow they filter through."

At one time, Saigon had been called "Pearl of the Orient." Captured by the French in 1859, it became the capitol of the French colony known as Cochin China and grew into a beautiful cultural center. In 1954, after French fighting with an indigent independence movement ended in a draw, the country was divided into north and south sections. Saigon became capital of American-backed South Vietnam. As the northern-based Communists pushed south, Saigon became the scene of violent fighting. By 1969, drowning in war refugees and host to the American Army—including the rough businesses which follow fighting men—Saigon had lost its beauty and delicate charm.

The Riekes received a walking tour of this historic city-in-transition. They strode along the Saigon River and watched US gunboats chug by. Along the waterway, they saw the black markets conduct business. The most prized commodity: American cigarettes.

Around lunch time, Glenn asked Eric, "Where are we going to get something to eat?" Eric answered, "We can go over to the Officer's Club." Glenn described the meal put up by the club as "beautiful!"

Much of the afternoon had slipped by when lunch ended. Thelma began to worry about missing the flight out, so the Riekes got in a taxi and headed back to the base. Thelma's anxiety jumped when, a half mile from the airport, they saw a DC-3 take off. Glenn didn't help matters when he asked, "Do you suppose that could be our plane?" Thelma very clearly stated the reason for her worry . "I didn't want to get left there!" she said.

After exiting the cab, the Riekes hustled into the terminal. It was only 5 pm and their flight wouldn't leave for another 2 1/2 hours. They visited the airport lounge to relax. Thelma, though, couldn't quite let go of her anxious state. "We saw our plane move and I was sure it was going to take off!" she said. Thelma asked Eric to inquire. He came back to say, no, the plane was just getting into position.

A half hour later, except for sad good-byes, Glenn and Thelma's visit ended without incident. It left a impression, though, that has lasted these many years. "It was good to see him and be right there," said Glenn. "It's an experience not many parents have had!"

For Eric, near the end of a 12-month overseas assignment, seeing his parents meant even more. "That was just pure joy!" he said. "I had told them beforehand that I would go to the airport and meet all three flights coming in. If they happened to get on one, fine. If not, I'll see them back in Indiana in three months. "So I met the first two flights and they weren't on the planes. Then, the third flight, they walked off the airplane.

"What a thrill!"

* * *

After Irvin got too old to host hunting trips on his Montana ranch, Glenn looked for other avenues to take part in exotic adventures. He found one outlet when he joined Club Limited. "We'd go bird hunting, wild game hunting and fishing all over the world," he said. At an annual meeting, club members—during Glenn's most active years, that accounted for about 60 people—met to plan that year's itinerary. Members who suggested trips usually took responsibility for their organization. "I arranged a few trips in my time," said Glenn. "I would take a group of fellows to Great Bear Lake, in Canada's Northwest Territories."

In the same year as the Vietnam visit, Glenn traveled to Mexico to hunt jaguars. "In 1969, in Mexico, we went to the Yucatan Peninsula, where the Mayan Indians built all kinds of temples in the heart of the jungle," he recalled. "The old Indian relics are still there." Hunting for the big cats closely resembles the way Indiana sportsmen hunt for deer. "Jaguars only travel and feed at nighttime," Glenn explained. "During the day, we shot a pickering—a wild hog—and brought him down to a trail to use as bait. Then you set up a perch in a tree."

One night, Glenn waited for 12 hours in a tree stand. His patience almost paid off. "I saw a jaguar coming down the trail," he said. "But for some reason—I don't think I scared him—he veered off and went into the bush. That's the closest I came."

The trip wouldn't be a total loss. "We got wild pickering and royal pheasants," Glenn explained. "Royal pheasants are about as big as our turkeys, weighing 12 to 15 pounds."

Glenn bagged this large elk on a hunting trip to Jackson Hole, Wyoming in October of 1972.

Perhaps the most insightful hunting trip took place in early 1975, when Club Limited traveled to Africa. "The safari was a husband-and-wife trip. About six couples went," said Glenn. "We camped out in the bush with big game all around, but the only hunting was shotgun shooting for birds. The rest of the trip was more or less a photography trip, taking pictures of animals we saw." The African birds didn't provide much sport. "Hunting birds there was like walking through a chicken coop," Glenn explained. "We would wait on the shore of this lake. It's dry in that country. Pretty near on the hour, a flock of birds will come in to get a drink."

Despite the group's focus on wildlife, Glenn most remembered his encounters with local people. In one such meeting, the Riekes gained a treasured keepsake. "We were at the pond shooting birds when a couple native boys come down with a herd of 15-20 camels," recalled Glenn. "The head man of the group, an older fellow, had a camel with a homemade wooden bell around its neck." Glenn told Thelma to see if the old herdsman would sell the bell. The language barrier took a while to overcome, but finally the native set a price for the bell: $2.

The value of American money in the African bush eluded Glenn. With no stores around, he wondered where the bushman could use cash. Still, he said, "They liked American dollars wherever you went."

The influence of money on Africans led Glenn to discuss his view of a larger picture: Americans' desire to be involved in Third World countries. "The natives from the bush over there are very, very poor," he said. "They live exactly the way they lived 10,000 years ago. If they plant something, they scratch the ground with a sharp instrument. They don't have plows or equipment like that." Glenn wasn't too impressed with males found in the African back country. "The men don't do nothing other than walk around and carry their spears," he said. "The women do all the work. If there's anything to carry, the women carry it. They do all the washing, all the cooking. The men just set there. You get disgusted with the men and their attitude!"

Glenn saw a vast gap between civilized and aboriginal people. "We are always try to improve our lot, but they don't try to improve theirs," he said. "They live in grass huts and live off the land. If there isn't anything to live on, they move. They're nomads. They wear out one area, then move to another."

Thelma poses with one of Club Limited's hunting helpers during the 1975 trip to Africa.

Just prior to Club Limited's visit, Glenn had been involved in an Auburn church mission to provide religious training and medical assistance to the African bush people. He made it a point of his visit to find out if the money was being used wisely. He returned convinced it was not. "I came back with this feeling: we were upsetting an ecology that existed for thousands of years over in Africa," he said. "In a way, I thought we were doing those people an injustice—even in giving them medicines so the little babies wouldn't die off so quick." He went on to explain: "All those people do is raise kids. With more kids, they have a king-sized problem. Where before these children died by disease and natural causes, now we're helping keep them alive so they starve to death." Hunger and overpopulation are continuous problems for which there appears no answer, said Glenn.

He described the situation as a two-edged sword. Whether First World nations help or not, the people suffer. Of the two approaches, he believed the more humane is to let aboriginal people live and die as they have for millenniums. "We should just stay away from the damn problem!" Glenn stated. "They were happy the way they were. Why go in and change their style of living? That's what we're trying to do. To me it's part of nature. That's the way nature does things."

* * *

Even good things come to an end.

About 1970, Glenn received the first contact from the Manoogian family of Masco Corporation. Masco wanted to buy Rieke Corp. "I guess I took a liking to the old man," Glenn said of the late Alex Manoogian. "He reminded me of my own father." Manoogian emigrated from Armenia in 1921. Once settled in America, he invented a faucet which is today marketed under the Delta brand name. Starting with nothing, he laid the foundation of one of America's top 500 companies. The Manoogian empire partly grew through the acquisition of other companies. The Manoogian's must have seen something they liked at RC. Over the course of about seven years, Richard Manoogian—Alex's son and the current president of Masco—made increasingly attractive offers

Glenn just as repeatedly declined to sell. He firmly believed that even after 25 years of continuous growth, RC was on the verge of erupting. The company controlled several very mature markets and new products promised it could compete well in other areas. Plus, although almost 70 years old, Glenn felt at his professional peak. He also kept the company in fighting form. "We were declaring over $1 a share in dividends each year," he explained. "If we had been running Rieke like a company should be run, we would be declaring 20 cents a share and using that other 80 cents to expand business, to take on other companies."

Glenn, right, shakes hands with Richard Manoogian after the sale of Rieke Corporation to the Masco Corporation is completed in January of 1978. Layden looks on in the left foreground while Irvin looks straight ahead at center left. TW looks on from the photo on the back wall.

But Manoogian didn't give up. He kept raising the ante until Masco made an offer that well exceeded the Riekes' expectations. At this point, Irvin stepped in. "Glenn, I think we ought to sell," the eldest member of the Rieke family said. "It will guarantee taking care of our family. That's all I'm interested in." Irvin pointed out that Glenn's days with RC were limited. Besides, control of the company was threatening to erode. The extended Rieke family, represented by several generations, held stock. Some were selling their shares and, with each sale, the percentage of power held by the family dropped. Over the family's weakened position, the specter of a hostile takeover loomed.

Glenn struggled with the decision. "This was one time I didn't quite agree with Irvin," he said. "Selling the company was hard for me to do on a personal level—very hard. But I was willing to go along."

In total, the family received $45 million for their share of the company. Another way to look at it, said Glenn, was $1 million for each year he worked for the company. When the sale became final in 1978, Glenn retired. At the time, RC sales exceeded $30 million a year.

More than 20 years after ending his professional career, Glenn talked energetically about RC's position in 1978 and where he would have liked to take the company. When asked about the source of this passion, he chuckled and said it didn't come preceded by a dollar sign. After a comfortable living is made for the family, said Glenn, running a business no longer revolves around money. The passion comes out of the ever-present challenge to expand, to grow and to compete.

Still, money from the sale did mean something. It accomplished TW's plan of 55 years earlier: the Riekes had arrived at Easy Street.

"From that standpoint," said Glenn. "selling the company may have been the right thing to do."

Irvin's dream ends in Montana

Glenn's close relationship with his older brother ended July 26, 1988. On that day, just a few weeks shy of his 87th birthday, Irvin passed away.

Quite fittingly, Irvin's end came in Montana. Despite its thorny treatment of him in his early years, Irvin loved the rough landscape and lived a dream when he moved onto his Montana ranch.

Irvin sold the Ox Bow in 1980, when he no longer felt he could take care of it. He spent the last years of his life in a home he built on the banks of the Yellowstone River, about 10 miles west of Billings, Montana.

Rieke Corporation continues to thrive

In preparing this book, Glenn asked Rieke Corporation for an update of its progress. The company's report proved what Glenn contended at the time of his retirement in 1978: that RC was on the verge of a sustained period of growth.

As 2000 began, RC's worldwide assets totaled $270 million. With manufacturing plants in Auburn; Mexico City; Leicester England; Neunkirchen, Germany; and Lecco, Italy; plus warehouses in Toronto; San Paulo, Brazil; and Singapore; the company employed 800 around the globe. On 750 million pieces manufactured each year, the company expects annual sales of $125 million.

From TW's original closure design, the number of patents held by the company has grown to more than 30. In keeping with a policy that dates back to the Rieke family's administration, RC continues to organize its operations in order to avoid laying off workers.

RETIREMENT

Chapter Twenty One

With the sale of the family business, Glenn found himself in an unfamiliar position. After a lifetime of hard work, his time was his own.

If anyone in the family worried, they needn't have. Glenn and Thelma wouldn't spend their retirement moping around.

* * *

As early as 1972, Glenn and Thelma began weighing retirement options. "We had been going to Florida each year for about a month or so, but everything is damp and sticky!" said Glenn. Then Carl and Margaret Bennett pointed the Riekes toward the West Coast. "I liked the weather in California and when we first went to Bermuda Dunes, we could ride our bicycle for 15 or 20 miles and not meet an automobile!" said Glenn. The Riekes decided to purchase a small condo in the backwater community.

Glenn and Thelma began to spend three or four months each winter in Bermuda Dunes. After seven or eight years, they bought a larger condo on the second fairway of the famous Bermuda Dunes Country Club.

Glenn didn't take up golf until he was well into his adult years, but in his retirement, he made up for lost time.

Glenn, right, hit a spectacular shot to help win a Bob Hope golf bag for his golfing partners including golf pro Keith Fergus, left, and Major League Baseball Hall of Fame catcher, Johnny Bench, second from left. Verne Sachs, center, completed the foursome.

Although his best scores never dipped below 82 or 83, he played in some high profile tournaments.

Through his membership at Bermuda Dunes, Glenn took part in 12 Bob Hope Classics. "The tournament is played on four different courses over four days. Each day they play a different course," said Glenn. Bermuda Dunes Country Club is one of those four courses. Members of the club get first shot at the openings for amateurs. Teams made up of three amateurs remain fixed on the schedule as pros rotate down one spot each day. In other words, over the first four days of the tournament, each team of amateurs gets to play with a different pro. The final day of the tournament—Sunday—the pros play each other for the title.

Under this system, Glenn met some legends of professional golf. "I played with Al Geiburger. They call him 'Mister 59,'" said Glenn. "He shot the lowest 18-hole score in the history of PGA tournaments—a 59. On the back of his business card, he has a copy of his score card from that round."

Glenn also met and played with golf stars Craig Stadler and Gary Player

Celebrities outside of golf took part in the tournament, too. On the day he played with baseball's Hall of Fame catcher Johnny Bench, Glenn made one of his most memorable shots. "On the last hole of Indian Wells Country Club, we needed to get to 17 under par in order to win a Bob Hope golf bag," said Glenn, setting the scene. "My first shot on the par four went into a wash, where flood waters run across the course. My second shot went left of the green onto a ridge, back of the clubhouse, just barely in-bounds." To accommodate the crowds, bleachers had been set up in a half-moon shape around the 18th green. Glenn found his ball behind the bleachers, right next to a sidewalk. "I couldn't see the green, so I had to use a wedge and try to go up over top of the bleachers," said Glenn. "People were settin' up there, watchin' me!" He chuckled. "They all ducked when I hit the ball." The shot would have made Geiburger proud. "The ball went over top of the bleachers, hit the upper corner of the green and trickled down," said Glenn. "It stopped about a foot from the hole!" Glenn saved par, the team took a three on the hole, and each member went home with a Bob Hope golf bag.

The best shot of Glenn's career, however, took place at Bermuda Dunes outside of the Bob Hope Classic. "On a Saturday evening, we had dinner with three fellas—Ove Jorgenson, Paul O'Malley and Carl Bennett, all from Fort Wayne—and their wives at the Bermuda Dunes Country Club," Glenn recalled. "Someone asked who had 'hole-in-one insurance.' Everybody, including the women, all held up their hand. I was the only one who didn't." Hole-in-one insurance, it should be explained, is a small fee paid to the club to guard against the possibility of hitting a perfect golf shot. Duffers who accomplish such a feat are expected to pick up the bar tab for their golfing group. For $2 a year, the club would "insure" a golfer against a large, one-time charge. On that happy Saturday night, the group asked Glenn why he didn't buy a policy. "Golly," he replied. "I've been playing golf for years and I've never had a hole in one. Why should I?"

The next morning–May 25, 1980—the group hit the links. As fate would have it, on the 17th hole Glenn hit a beautiful 3-wood 173 yards to the front of the green. As the group watched in amazement, the ball disappeared in the cup!

Back at the clubhouse for lunch,

Glenn picks his hole-in-one out of the cup as, from left, Paul O'Malley, Ove Jorgensen, and Carl Bennett serve as witnesses.

Glenn unexpectedly discovers relative

The Riekes were friends for many years with Carl and Margaret Bennett before they made a surprising discovery. "One day they were at the farm, down at the swimming pool. I was talking to Margaret and asked what her maiden name was," said Glenn. When Margaret replied, "Schuster," Glenn sat up. "That's my great-grandfather's last name!" he said.

"We got to talking and found out that her grandmother was a sister of Katherine (Schuster) Rieke—my grandmother. So we were distant cousins!"

Carl Bennett rose and made a speech. He reminded the group of Glenn's supreme confidence in his own lack of golf ability, and that any drinks served should go directly to the offending golfer's tab.

"The lack of insurance cost me $250!" Glenn chuckled.

* * *

As in other areas of their long, full lives, during retirement Glenn and Thelma went through several phases. The period during which they owned a motor home might be described as their footloose phase.

Riekes end California days

Since Glenn and Thelma began visiting almost 30 years ago, the sleepy town of Bermuda Dunes has changed. "People have woke up to the fact that it's a good area to live," said Glenn. "It's now getting over-populated, as far as I'm concerned." Gone are the days of leisurely bike rides and long sightseeing drives.

Advancing years have also limited the couple's desire for long trips. Early in the year 2000, the Riekes sold their condo and ended their California days.

Rubbing elbows with celebrities

Glenn and Thelma ran in social circles that brought them into contact with several celebrities. "In Bermuda Dunes, someone was talking loud in a restaurant and I said, 'Is Liberace in here?'" Glenn recalled. Sure enough, the flamboyant pianist was sitting only a short distance away.

Bob Hope and his wife were Bermuda Dunes' most famous residents. "I sat at a table next to Hope's wife at a restaurant. She had another party with her," said Glenn. Through his participation in Hope's annual golf tournament, Glenn on several occasions met the famous comedian. "We've sat in the clubhouse and talked several times," he said. Unfortunately, the closest Glenn came to playing a round of golf with Hope was one foursome behind. Glenn gives the comedian his highest form of praise. "I always felt he was a real Joe," said Glenn. "He was plain and outspoken, good company to be around. He always had something to say." Hope's golf game also ranked in good company. "He was only as good a golfer as I was at that time," Glenn reported.

In general, though, Glenn didn't care much for stars with big names. "Those kind of people never impressed me much," he said. "They usually have an audience around them. I shied away from that."

Glenn and Thelma had their photo taken with President George Bush, center, and his wife Barbara in the early 1990s. Vice President Dan Quayle and his wife Marilyn stand at left.

"We bought the motor home in 1977 and had it nine years," Glenn reported. "We took it to pretty near every state in the union, except Alaska and Hawaii. The whole family, including both boys' families, used it extensively and put about 75,000 miles on it."

"We'd go on some extended trips, but a lot of our trips were short," added Thelma. "We'd go somewhere with another couple, maybe take a golfing trip down in Kentucky."

During these vagabond days, Glenn began speculating in oil wells. "Irvin's boy, Ted, was in the business of locating oil fields," he explained. "Irvin helped him finance one, so I went in with him." Excitement over the prospect of a really big score couldn't be ignored. Glenn and Thelma drove the motor home through northwest Montana to watch the drills hit pay dirt. "We stood all day out there, but it was a dry hole, so we lost that money," Glenn said with a shrug. "I had one up by St. Clair, Michigan, that we went to watch them open. We took our motor home and slept by the well that night." This hole, too, was dry. But not all of Glenn's black gold turned to dust. "I had other oil ventures down in Texas that paid out pretty good for about 10 years," he said.

Glenn compared oil drilling to gambling—an investor might have to go through some bad hands while hoping to find an ace. He put a philosophical stance on his losses. "Most of them are dry holes," he said, "but when you hit one, they pay out what you lost on others!"

For nine years the Riekes traveled extensively in this motor home.

One of the motor home trips Glenn liked least took place near the end of the vehicle's service to the family. "We went on a two or three-week trip through Canada, up to Banff in 1983," Glenn said. "We were in Casper, Wyoming, coming back across the mountains, when we lost the air out of our air-ride system. The motor home went right down to the bottom of the suspension system and gave a really rough ride. It happened on a Sunday, and we couldn't get anyone to work on it!"

The Riekes came upon a GMC dealership and decided they wouldn't push their luck any further—nor would the vehicle let them. "The parking lot had an incline going into the GMC place," said Glenn with a chuckle. "We were riding so low, the trailer hitch dug into the asphalt. It wouldn't let us go forward and we couldn't back out!"

Wedged halfway into the lot, Glenn looked for a way out of the awkward predicament. "We finally found a fellow with a lift truck who could lift the back end up a couple of inches so I could drive forward," Glen recalled. "It took him only about 10 seconds to lift the motor home up and move it forward about two feet."

After that, the Riekes were determined to get the problem fixed. “We just camped that night in the dealer’s driveway,” said Glenn. “We were the first customer on Monday morning!”

* * *

Some of the retirement years were truly golden. In 1985, Glenn and Thelma reached the 50-year milestone in their lives together. They celebrated two different times in a style that fit their lives: by traveling and in the company of family.

Just prior to the anniversary year, for Christmas of 1984, Glenn and Thelma treated their extended family—12 members altogether—to a trip to Hawaii. They golfed, swam and took a memorable trip to the top of the World’s largest dormant volcano. “We drove to the top of Mount Haleakala on Maui, then rode bicycles back down, 35 miles to the sea!” said Glenn (Thelma, not an experienced biker, rode in the van on the return trip). “We stopped about half way down for lunch at an inn.”

Back on the mainland, the official 50th anniversary celebration took place June 29 at Eric’s home. “Our two sons and their wives had invited all our relatives—the Riekes and the Laydens — about 75 couples,” recalled Glenn. “We all gathered for a cookout on Saturday evening.”

Then, for one memorable moment, the festivities stopped. Everyone gathered around as Glenn opened one of the gallon jugs of cherry wine he and Thelma bottled two weeks before their wedding. Tiny glasses were poured and passed around the assembled crowd. Then all drank at the same time. Glenn could have been speaking of his long-lived marriage when he said, “To me, it tasted just like it did a month after we made it!”

Glenn joined gun club

Young businessmen started what became Auburn’s Rod & Gun Club around 1910. In its early years, association members took part in local hunts. In 1918, the group drew up by-laws and became an organized club. Over the years, as the populations of local game animals disappeared and the great hunters turned older, the club changed its focus. By the time Glenn joined in 1957, Rod & Gun club members used their monthly meetings mainly to play poker.

Up through this writing, Glenn had served four or five years as chief of what is considered Auburn’s oldest continuous club. Scanning a photo of members served as a reminder of the passage of time. “Looking through this group, there’s only four of us alive,” he said. Where by-laws allow for 18 members, the club is down to 15. Still, in a celebration of the human spirit, remaining members continue to meet the third Wednesday of each month, just as they have for the past 82 years.

The next day, the crowd gathered at Layden and Suzan’s house over a memorable brunch. “We said our farewells to all our relatives after a great, great weekend that we’ve always cherished,” said Glenn.

* * *

As Glenn and Thelma approached their mid-70s, Cedar Creek Valley Farm became more responsibility than they wished to handle. By 1986, they had lived on the tree-shaded acres more than 40 years. Both boys had grown up in the back woods and fields. During their lives there, Thelma had added world travel to her life’s experiences. At the same time, Glenn’s career at RC had reached its apex and come to its end. In between these exciting adventures, most of the real stuff in their lives took place on the farm. Memories could be found in every nook and cranny.

Yet, despite temptations to live in the past, Glenn and Thelma continued to look ahead. They bought property at 1103 Cabriolet Boulevard in northeast Auburn and made plans to build a new home.

Cedar Creek Valley Farm went up for sale. A brochure put out by Allen Graber Realty described the Riekes' house as a "Gracious Colonial." A list of amenities served as testament to the hard work the couple put into the place during their four decades of residence. It included well-kept grounds, beamed ceiling, library with built-in desk, built-in china closet, three fireplaces, curly maple and knotty pine walls in bedrooms, white oak walls throughout the rest of the house, cedar closets and enclosed porch. A description of the grounds mentioned a pool, bank barn, two garden areas, trap shooting facilities, caretaker cottage and bell tower. Perhaps in tribute to those Eisen glass-eating geese from his own childhood, Glenn had the realtor throw in this last item of assets: "pair of peacocks."

To the Rieke's delight, the farm sold quickly. To their dismay, they wouldn't have time to finish building their Cabriolet home before the new Cedar Creek Valley Farm owner took possession. "So we bought an interim house at 512 Hawthorne Place and lived there about six months," said Glenn.

In the spring of 1987, contractors finished the Cabriolet home. It would be, Glenn insisted, "our last address." The comfortable home featured many Rieke touches. It was decorated with the solid oak furniture from the farm. Glenn's trophy moose head and hand-carved desk found a new home in the study. In pointing out design features, Glenn took credit for the back wall, which consisted almost entirely of windows. "I drew up plans for the house, including lots of windows," he explained. Due to his childhood on the Montana prairie, he said, "I like wide open spaces. I don't like to be penned in." Not coincidentally, the windows gave a glorious view of hole number four on Greenhurst Country Club's front nine.

* * *

In 1990, another significant anniversary arrived. Glenn and Thelma celebrated their 55th year of wedded bliss with a cruise up the coast of Norway. "We flew over to Copenhagen, Denmark, where we spent a day shopping, and the next day flew to Bergen, Norway, where we boarded the French tour ship, M.S. Mermoz," Glenn recalled. "We visited a lot of fiords along the coast and went up all the way to the island of Spitzbergen, where the English mine a lot of coal. It is the northern most point of civilization."

At the next stop, Glenn and Thelma proved that they were still on top of the world. "We went further north to what's called the Polar Cap," explained Glenn. "We were told we were within 250 miles of the North Pole." He added an interesting side note: there's no land under the North Pole; the terrain is simply a solid block of ice. "So our ship went up and touched the ice cap with the bow," said Glenn. "That's as far as we could go!"

In their far north environs, the anniversary couple saw icebergs floating by with black walruses sunning themselves. They saw the spouts and broad backs of whales that cruised close by. Everything was perfect—except for a couple of minor irritations. "Being a French ship, all the signs and every word that was spoken were in French," Glenn explained. "It made communication difficult."

To cope, the Riekes ate and visited with the only other two English-speaking couples—one American and one British.

Glenn also detected an attitude from French passengers which he found off-putting. He offered a story to illustrate: "We were there on the Fourth of July. That evening, when the meal was over, the ship turned the lights real dim and the kitchen doors opened up. Here comes the chef with a great big cake and sparkler candles, all lit, and an entourage following him. They had a parade clear around the dining room and stopped at our table. They sang 'God Bless America.' It was very touching."

Then a funny thing happened. "There wasn't a peep out of the other guests. They all set there stone faced, like 'What the hell is going on?'" remembered Glenn. "That's the attitude we got from them. Being witness to American patriotism that night didn't go over with the crowd at all!"

With America's all-out effort during World War II, and the impact the country had in bringing the fighting to a close, Glenn felt the French should show more gratitude—at the very least, a friendly attitude toward fellow Allies. He left the dinner slightly upset.

Then an old Frenchman hobbled up to Glenn. He held out his hand in greeting. "Mr. Rieke," the man said. "I'd like to shake your hand. I'm one Frenchman that appreciates what you Americans done for us!"

* * *

Like his mother before him, Glenn enjoyed the long travel excursions which retirement afforded. In 1991, he and Thelma took a fascinating tour of China. They saw Beijing, the Great Wall, and Tiananmen Square. Then they flew into the interior of the vast country to see sights off the beaten tourist paths.

Glenn would reach his 80th birthday that year, but the trip proved he hadn't lost any of his stubbornness toward authority with which he didn't agree. "They had uncovered this Monarch buried with a complete army of statues—horses and men, wagons and carts," Glenn explained. All the hundreds of figures were full-sized, a virtual army to accompany the leader to the underworld. Glenn was impressed with the spectacle, but not the reasoning behind it. "They do some screwy things over there!" he opined.

The Chinese refer to the area as Lintong. It is the burial ground of Emperor Qin Shi Huang. Through a series of wars more than 200 years before Christ, Qin first consolidated China. The leader died in 210 BC and his elaborate tomb was built by 700,000 convicts over 38 years. It included 7,000 terra cotta figures, both soldiers and horses, along with countless bronze pieces. Chinese peasants discovered the site in 1974. Archeologists rank its significance alongside the pyramids of Egypt, the Acropolis of Athens and the Forum in Rome.

Despite signs prohibiting the use of cameras at the famous dig, Glenn had his video cassette recorder rolling during his and Thelma's visit. The particular cassette on which he recorded included an hour's worth of pictures taken at other sites in China. "I was standing there taking pictures when a couple of guys come up and tapped me on the shoulder," Glenn said, picking up the story. "They wanted the camera." Glenn refused to give it up. A standoff ensued.

"Of course, they couldn't speak English and I couldn't speak to them," said Glenn. The guards finally made motions which Glenn understood. Something to the effect of, "You're coming with us!" "They took me into a room to interrogate me," said Glenn. "I didn't know what the hell was going to happen!" The Riekes had been part of a guided tour when the incident occurred. About 20 to 25 people —including Thelma—witnessed the scene. Although Glenn didn't know if witnesses for his defense meant anything in authoritative China, he stuck to his guns. "They wanted the film, I wouldn't give it to them," he recalled. "I was in there 30 or 40 minutes. They didn't know what to do and I didn't know what to do."

Finally, Glenn decided to communicate via a universal language. "I pulled out an American bill and held it out," he said. For $10, he bought his freedom and got to keep his camera and film.

* * *

As the years passed, Glenn suffered health problems which threatened his active lifestyle.

The first serious episode took place one year before he retired, in 1977. "We were at our California condo," explained Thelma. "Glenn had suffered chest pains out there and been in the hospital. The doctors called it 'pericarditis.' Glenn wasn't able to play golf or anything, but we were ready to come home that weekend anyway." On a Sunday, the Riekes boarded their flight as scheduled. At a stopover in Dallas, Glenn noticed his ankles were swelling. "We knew something was not right," said Thelma. They continued with the trip, but Glenn's condition only grew worse. "We got home and he could hardly move," Thelma said. "We lived out on the farm and had our water turned off. He made one trip down to the basement and one trip upstairs to turn on faucets. After that, he couldn't go any farther." They called the doctor. He asked Glenn to see him first thing Monday morning.

At 8 o'clock, Glenn went in. At 8:30, the doctor called Thelma and said, "He's not coming back home. He's going to the hospital." Glenn had an infection in the sack around his heart. Fluid had built up, interfering with the organ's life-sustaining work. Luckily, the heart itself wasn't damage. After a week in the hospital, the condition cleared up.

Perhaps the most dramatic of Glenn's physical setbacks began on June 21, 1994. "I was trying to fix one of these folding ladders that came out of the ceiling in the garage," Glenn explained. "I was up on top of a step ladder and the folding ladder come down and knocked the ladder I was on

China inspired awe and consternation

While in China, Glenn and Thelma took a boat trip down the Yangtze River. "The walls of the famous gorges go up two or 3,000 feet," said Glenn. "About 100 feet or so above the waterline, they literally carved a walkway out of the stone for miles."

The trip could lift the human soul. "Maybe 1,000 feet up would be a crevice in the rock and you could see old wooden caskets," explained Glenn. The ancient Chinese somehow buried important people in the sheer cliffs. "They figure the higher they are buried, the closer they are to heaven," Glenn explained.

The trip also exposed the shortcomings of the current Chinese society. "They say that over 300 million people live along the river," Glenn stated. "You can imagine—it looks like a sewer with sludge floating in it. When I was on that trip I thought, 'I hope to hell this boat don't sink and I have to swim in that stuff!'"

Ultimately, the fate of the historic gorge rests with the Chinese government. Glenn said plans have been made to build a dam across the waterway. When that happens, the sheer natural cliffs and stone walkway will be lost forever underwater, while the ancient monarch caskets will be close to eye level for future river travelers.

out from under me. I hit the concrete floor." The impact broke both lower bones of his right leg. As a result of what doctors call a "compound fracture," the jagged ends of the broken bones broke through the skin. Doctors advised amputating the injured limb, but Glenn refused permission. Although he never fully recovered from the mishap, he felt he made the right decision. "I've had the use of the leg for five years now, so it was worth it," he said.

The leg, though, repeatedly caused more problems. "I just about give up golf this year," said Glenn in 1999. "I tried three or four times and each time the leg got a little worse, more sore. I can't turn on it." He approached the future with practical resolution. "Golf is one of those things you've got to face the facts: you can't do it anymore," said Glenn with a shrug. "I'm 88 years old now. I'm hoping the leg will hold up a few more years and last me."

A year after the leg injury, in August of 1995, Glenn found he couldn't turn his neck. "I couldn't move my head at all!" he said. "When I tried, there was terrible pain." He traveled down to Fort Wayne's Parkview Memorial Hospital for treatment of what doctors called "frozen neck." Through therapy, Glenn overcame the condition. He received instructions on exercises to prevent a relapse —exercises he still continued to do through this writing.

Two small strokes produced lasting affects on Glenn. The first stroke struck May 3, 1996. It left his left side weak and paralyzed his epiglottis. Recovering from the affliction was complicated when doctors installed a feeding tube in Glenn's chest. Undigested food entered his lungs, where it lodged and caused infection. The infection then led to pneumonia. Despite the multitude of problems, Glenn recovered fairly quickly. He began rehabilita-

Pictures capture prey

On another hunting trip outside of Club Limited, Glenn scored an accurate shot–and his prey never knew it had been captured.

"We were fishing near Homer, Alaska," said Glenn. "I caught a little fish a few inches long. In taking the hooks out, I killed the fish. So I threw it out back of the boat."

While this mini-drama was taking place, Glenn kept his eye on a bald eagle perched atop a nearby tree.

"He saw me throw that fish," Glenn said. "Immediately, he picked up his wings and swooped down."

Glenn grabbed his camera and squeezed off two shots. He caught the eagle in action: once setting his wings, a second time taking off from the water with his snack.

tion on May 17 and went home June 11.

A second stroke hit Glenn on July 20, 1997. If that wasn't enough, about the same time, he suffered a bleeding ulcer. Still, out of sheer stubbornness, he recovered.

Then, in 1999, doctors ordered Glenn to refrain from eating all solid food. His neck muscles, weakened from the stroke, weren't allowing him to swallow properly. Once again, undigested food was getting into his lungs, causing pneumonia. A feeding tube, this time through his throat, was installed until his ability to swallow returned. "It kind of takes all the joy out of life," Glenn said of the limited diet. In a matter of weeks, though, the problem corrected itself and he gratefully went back to a normal plate of food.

In the summer of 1999, falls tripped up both Glenn and Thelma. On July 20, Thelma stepped awkwardly off the step at the edge of her kitchen. The resulting fall broke her knee cap. To keep the leg immobile, doctors outfitted Thelma's leg with a full-length cast which stayed on for nine weeks. Six days after Thelma fell, Glenn joined her on the injury list. Thelma heard running water outside the house about 10 pm one evening. The source of the sound turned out to be lawn sprinklers that had been left on. Without turning on a light, Glenn went into the dark to turn the sprinklers off. Rounding a corner, he tripped. Trying to catch himself, Glenn injured his arm.

By Thanksgiving of 1999, both Glenn and Thelma had virtually healed and were able to enjoy a happy holiday season.

LEAVING a LEGACY

Chapter Twenty Two

Between the years 1960 and 2000, Glenn took actions which would build a lasting legacy of his life's work. Through his efforts, DeKalb County residents received improved health care, airport service and recreation. Always building on foundations—the monetary variety—Glenn assured his influence would be felt in the community long after he was gone.

* * *

Through the early part of the 20th Century, Auburn residents relied on two individual doctors and their facilities to provide serious medical care. Dr. J. A. Sanders Hospital at 1007 South Main Street and Dr. Bonnell M. Souder Hospital–on the south side of Sixth Street, between Jackson and Van Buren streets–had been serving the community since 1926 and 1915 respectively.

In 1955, the Auburn Lion's Club began considering whether DeKalb County could support a new, larger hospital. The following year, the club hired a professional survey maker. Interest grew. As a result of the survey, county residents circulated a petition asking for more information. Judge Harold D. Stump assumed leadership of the project. Responding to the petition, Stump named an eight-person board charged with discovering details on building and running a medical establishment.

"I happened to be in Florida at that particular time," Glenn remembered. "I was advised the judge had put me on a panel to look into building a new hospital." The board members went one step further: they voted Glenn to lead their efforts.

The group met in Glenn's RC office. "The first thing we had to do," he recalled, "was decide what we wanted to build." Glenn put his aviation skills to work. The panel would hop into his twin-engine Beechcraft Travelair for quick visits to hospitals in Fort Wayne, Van Wert (Ohio), and Warsaw. On one occasion, they met with the Indiana State Health Department, based in Indianapolis. Through their investigation, the panel formed ideas of how many beds the hospital needed and what equipment should be included. The physical features of the plant began to take shape.

In June of 1960, the panel presented its report to Judge Stump. "One of the things we considered was the operation of the hospital—who should own it," Glenn said. "We told the judge we saw hospitals operated by counties and we didn't want any part of it! County-run hospitals were badly managed. Not only that, they were financially in the hole all the time. We couldn't see any reason for their predicament, other than the fact that they were being operated by a bunch of politicians." In reaction to its distaste for a government-run operation, the panel suggested a new—although not unique—type of ownership. "Let the people own it!" said Glenn. "It would be strictly a not-for-profit operation. The county and city would have no hand in its operation." The judge concurred. "Okay, go ahead and build it," he said.

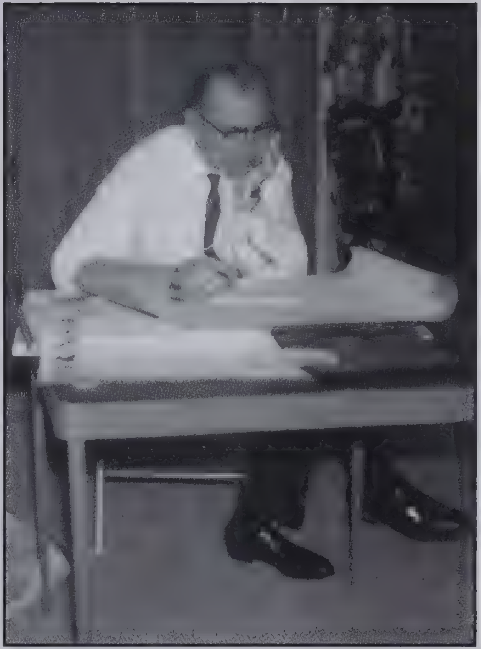
Suddenly, Glenn's responsibilities went beyond dreaming about a hospital to taking charge of its actual construction. Despite its enormity, the task suited him well. In building and equipping Rieke plants around the world, Glenn gained experience tackling big jobs. Since his school days at Purdue, he had never been intimidated by a job's size because of one treasured tidbit of advice. "I always remembered something one of my professors said," said Glenn. "'There isn't any such thing as a big job. Every job can be broken into little jobs and delegated to others.'" To build the hospital, Glenn sought both professional and volunteer help.

The first job: raise money. "I hired a fund-raising outfit from Chicago, Beaver & Associates. They set up an office and run the campaign for us," Glenn said. Because the fledgling hospital organization had no funds to speak of, Glenn personally guaranteed the fundraiser's first installment payment of $25,000.

The fate of the project rested on whether financial support could be garnered from the community. A fulcrum on which that support rested would be a community meeting held on the bitterly cold evening of January 7, 1961. Project organizers asked 1,000 volunteers from around the county to meet in the McIntosh High School gymnasium. Whoever showed up would be asked to take home two pledge drive cards. In other words, the project hoped to collect up to 2,000 pledges of money through the event.

As people crowded into the gymnasium, Glenn knew that he had a mandate from the people. "Instead of 1,000 people, we got 3,000!" he said. "Instead of being able to give everybody two cards, we had to hand out just one card per person, and still some people didn't get any!"

Momentum for the hospital only



Glenn poured over hospital plans at a card table in the Rieke living room in 1960.

grew. On February 2, 1961, Glenn was in Florida for a week-long vacation when he received a phone call from his old friend CJ Maxton. "He said the hospital program had over-subscribed the amount of money it needed by $250,000!" said Glenn. With $700,000 in Hilberton Funds from the US government, the project raised more than $2.3 million. After money had been raised, the project never broke stride. Finalized plans from an architect received the community's approval. In December of 1961, contractors broke ground.

Two years later, as the new hospital neared completion, Glenn's group decided to hold an open house to introduce the facility to the public. Thelma well remembered preparations for the event. "I was taking instructions on how to lead tours when an announcement came over the loudspeaker." The emergency news report chilled the festive mood. President John F. Kennedy had been shot and killed! "I'll never forget that day!" Thelma said. "We all just stopped in our tracks and stood there."

Despite mourning with the nation over its fallen leader, DeKalb County celebrated its new medical facility. The weather of Sunday, December 2, 1963, again challenged county residents' commitment. Again, support proved overwhelming. More than 12,000 people braved the cold to attend the open house. During a short dedication ceremony, more than 1,000 had to wait outside.

Along the jammed corridors, Glenn's voice could be heard over loudspeakers. "I would like for all of you to

Glenn put gun away when JFK died

While on a hunting trip at the Rolling Rock Clubhouse in Latrobe, Penn., Glenn heard the shocking news: John F. Kennedy, President of the United States, had been shot!

"I had just become a member of the hunting club and this was one of my first trips," Glenn recalled. "Another fellow from New York and I were going to hunt together and had just picked up our guns to go out the door when we heard the flash over the radio."

Glenn didn't share Kennedy's political views, but he did share the nation's shock and disgust with the shooting.

The two men continued to walk towards the woods, but no wildlife would die that day. "We went out about a mile from camp, set down under a tree and talked about the situation: what effect it would have on the country and so-forth," said Glenn. Finally, he turned to his partner and said, "If it's all right with you, I'd as soon just go back to the lodge. I don't feel like hunting today." Glenn's partner replied, "I don't either."

When they returned to the lodge, they received word that Kennedy had died from his wounds.

know how much I have enjoyed working the past years with the foundation board, the board of directors, and the hundreds of unselfish citizens who have played a part in the hospital program.," he said. "Among the thousands of requests I made for performance of tasks, I never had that first refusal. I feel humble and proud to be a part of this community."

Glenn then said something that, viewed in hindsight over the years, seems unnecessarily humble. But, when facing an uncertain future, he meant it when he concluded, "I hope we have spent your money wisely!"

A quick look at numbers prove the hospital committee did just that. The building cost $1.8 million to build and another $250,000 to equip. After all bills had been paid, the board still had about $150,000 in the bank. Using this as seed money, Glenn and the board created the DeKalb County Hospital Foundation, Inc. Over the next 34 years, the body of this investment grew to more than $2.6 million and—at the time of this writing—had provided $2 million for new hospital equipment and construction. In other words, thanks to the generous donations of the community, the original organizers of DeKalb Memorial Hospital not only built a facility that was unencumbered with debt, they also provided a perpetual source of funding to help the hospital in the future!

As the hospital became reality, the construction program panel stepped aside to allow a permanent board of trustees to take direction of the facility. Not surprisingly, this new board chose Glenn as its president. He held the position for eight years.

On January 2, 1964, DeKalb Memorial Hospital—dubbed the "Modern Miracle of Indiana" by the Indianapolis Star for its overwhelming community support—opened its doors. To recognize his role, the hospital presented Glenn with a tongue-in-cheek award. The small plaque featured one small item that said it all: a whip.

* * *

More tragedy tempers hospital high

Glenn's excitement over DeKalb Memorial Hospital was tempered by tragedy in July of 1963.

Just as Dr. Bonnell Souder announced she would donate her hospital's obstetric equipment to the new facility, shocking news arrived from Ontario, Canada: Ruth Kelly had died unexpectedly.

Ruth Rieke Kelly

On June 26, Glenn's sister had begun a three-week fishing trip at Merle's Lac Seul Lodge near Ear Falls in the company of Dr. and Mrs. H.M. Covell. Ruth reported not feeling well, but had been up for dinner the evening before. When she did not respond to a call for breakfast the next morning, her friends discovered her dead from a heart attack.

Glenn sent his airport manager at the time, James Eyster, to pick up Ruth's body. Accompanied by Forrest Gerig and Howard Thimlar, Eyster made the trip in Glenn's Beechcraft Travelair.

Mahlon couldn't be notified of Ruth's death immediately. He and his wife were on a cruise in the Great Lakes. Authorities finally caught up with the ship near Georgian Bay in Lake Huron.

Funeral services were held on July 6 at the Gerig Funeral Home. The family asked that memorials to Ruth be made in the form of contributions to DeKalb Memorial Hospital.

Glenn liked the idea of foundations. They provided solutions to problems on into perpetuity. Under Glenn's leadership, RMPC started a foundation for the Auburn community right after World War II.

"I recognized Auburn didn't have foundations or money reserves set up to do jobs needed done in the community," Glenn explained. "RC established its foundation first. We started with $100,000 of corporate money and each year the company adds to it. As the body grows, so does the money which it generates. This year—2000—the foundation will .probably grant about $50,000 to local charities."

About the time the hospital opened, Glenn led efforts to form a foundation for Auburn's YMCA. "I served one hitch as president of the Y in the 1940s," Glenn recalled. "At that time, the budget for the entire operation was about $8,000 per year. It paid the salary of a man and his wife to run the place, paid for lights and stuff like that."

Although $8,000 wasn't much to run a community center like the Y, the organization's board struggled each year to raise even that small amount. "Every year, we had to have a fundraising program," said Glenn. "We'd have roughly 50 men and women go out and raise funds to keep the Y open another year. That, to me, was a very poor way of handling it."

Glenn wanted a foundation that could supply working capital for the Y and other charitable purposes in the community. He asked the lawyers who created the hospital foundation to create yet another foundation. Once again, community support proved overwhelming. "We were surprised," said Glenn. He illustrated the comment with this story: "A farmer from Butler who was in his late 80s or early 90s come in to see one of the lawyers. He said, 'I want to draw up a will. I've got a nephew who isn't worth a hill of beans and I don't want him to get my money, so I want to give to worthy causes.' The lawyer told the man about DeKalb Memorial Hospital and added, 'That would be a wonderful place to put some of your money.' The farmer replied, 'Okay, here's $100,000.'

"Two or three weeks later, the farmer showed up again in the lawyer's office. He said, 'You got any other place to put some money? I've got a little left.' The lawyer answered, 'We're starting a foundation for the YMCA. How about helping them?' 'If you recommend it,' the farmer said, 'It's okay with me.' And he wrote another check for $100,000!"

Over the years, the YMCA foundation became known as the Auburn Foundation. The Y itself relies very little on the foundation for its operating fund any more, getting the bulk of its funding from membership fees and the DeKalb County United Way, said Glenn. But the community itself still benefits greatly from the foundation.

Finally, on September 16, 1986, the Glenn and Thelma Rieke Foundation came into being. Through it, the couple supported causes close to their hearts.

Glenn served on Tri-State board

While he was still working on the DeKalb Memorial Hospital project, Glenn joined the Tri-State University board of directors.

From 1962 through 1985, Glenn continuously served on the university's board. As of this writing, he still attended meetings as an "emeritus" board member.

The university–located in Angola, just north of Auburn–honored its long time supporter on May 5, 1977. On that day, Tri-State conferred on Glenn an honorary doctorate of engineering.

As the body of the investment grows, so too do the yearly amounts granted. Currently, the foundation provides about $15,000 annually to local charities.

Glenn and Thelma Rieke packed so much into their lifetimes, it seems as if they were given more than one apiece. Their charitable work continues that theme. For, through on-going foundations, their charity takes on a life of its own.

* * *

Auburn Airport had always been a little cramped for elbow room. As private planes continued to grow in size and power, and as development crept into the area surrounding the airfield, Glenn grew nervous. "I became worried about having an accident," he said. "The airport was right on the edge of the city. We had to take off and fly right over private homes."He began dropping hints that the county ought to build a new airport. The hints boomeranged right back at him. "The county in effect said, 'Rieke, you know what airports need. What do you propose we build?'" said Glenn with a chuckle.

Glenn certainly did know small airports. In 1956, he had encouraged a group of area pilots who flew out of his airport to form Auburn Airways, Inc. The group—Glenn, Dick Fink, Don Allison, Wayne Morrill, Carl Bennett, and Jim Eyster—could provide the financial backing for improvements that Glenn alone could not. The association bore fruit immediately. In 1957, the airport added a Unicom Radio to facilitate communication and installed runway lights to aid visibility. In 1958, Auburn Airways, Inc., paved the airport's main runway. Unfortunately, improvements only underscored the old airport's shortcomings.

When in 1960 the county asked Glenn what a new airport would need, he was ready with an answer. "You've got to have runways for modern airplanes," he said. "You don't need them right away, but you should plan on eventually having runways a mile in length. And the airport should be in the countryside, with no developments around." After Glenn reported on the new airport's ideal location, the county asked if he wouldn't mind locating such a place.

With the assistance of Eyster, Glenn identified four choice locations. After the details of a sale were worked through, a location three miles south of Auburn was chosen. Funding for a new airport came from three sources. DeKalb County provided $100,000 to buy land and build hangers. The City of Auburn kicked in $50,000 for constructing a runway. The third partner, Auburn Airways, paid $35,000 to build a terminal and corporate hanger.

DeKalb County Airport was dedicated in 1964.

Over the years, Auburn Airways had marketed its management expertise to other small airports. At its height, the group operated Fort Wayne's Smith Field, Kendallville Airport, Kokomo Airport, and an airfield in Sturgis, Michigan. To reflect its wider responsibilities, in 1968 Auburn Airways changed its name to Consolidated Airways.

Although Consolidated Airways sold its DeKalb assets in the mid 1970s, the airport never forgot Glenn's contribution. At dedication services for a new terminal building held at 11 am on December 11, 1996, the secretary of the DeKalb County Board of Aviation Commissioners, John Foley, made this introduction: "Today we celebrate the completion of the major construction of our 5,000 foot runway and taxi-ways that has prepared DeKalb Airport to handle the modern day corporate and private aircraft used by our area industries and citizens. "We are most fortunate to have Mr. Glenn Rieke of Auburn, a man who has promoted aviation in DeKalb County for many years, to cut our ceremonial ribbon and open this airport. Ladies and Gentlemen, I present Mr. Glenn Rieke."

Glenn stepped forward. "I've been looking forward to this for a long time," he simply said, and cut the ribbon. As the foil fell away, the reconstructed airport and its new headquarters—named the Glenn T. Rieke Terminal—opened for business. A plaque in the terminal explains the name this way: "Under his leadership this airport was established in 1964 by the county and City of Auburn."

With Thelma behind him, Glenn prepares to cut the ribbon which will officially open the Glenn T. Rieke terminal at DeKalb County Airport. DeKalb County Aviation Board president Don Smith looks on at left while board secretary John Foley , right, conducts the ceremony.

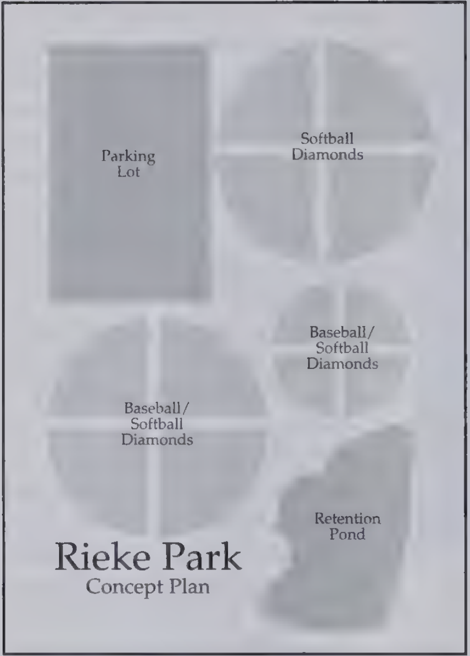
* * *

When DeKalb County Airport originally opened in 1964, Glenn closed Auburn Airport. The little field had taken part in quite a bit of history. From its earliest days of riding aviation's first wave with Bill Fitzsimmons, to being tamed by Auburn's most famous resident, EL Cord, the little airport had been a pioneer. Under Glenn, the airport added features until it experienced a brush with celebrity—being recognized as one of the nation's best small airfields. It's descent into oblivion would be relatively short. Soon after it closed, Glenn had the paved runway removed and returned most of the land to cultivation. The hanger held on as rented storage space until 1982, at which time Glenn had it taken down. The disappearance of Auburn Airport was so complete that many new residents in town would be surprised to learn it ever existed.

But that will change.

On Monday, October 17, 1994, Glenn and Thelma were the focal point of a small ceremony in the office of Auburn Mayor Norman Rohm. As the press took notes, the Riekes announced that they would be donating the 63.35 acres that used to be Auburn Airport to the city. Two independent appraisals of the land placed its value between $340,000 and $350,000.

Rohm said the land would be made into the largest recreational facilities in Auburn. It's name: Rieke Park. At the time, the total area of the city's other 11 parks totaled 54 acres—10 less than Rieke Park alone! Four of the existing parks hosted ball diamonds. Rohm said city planners long had hoped to consolidate all city ball diamonds at one location "Parents



who have children playing in different leagues at the same time have to either make fast trips across town in hope of seeing each child play, or see one child play and not another," said Rohm. The city had been searching for land to build just such a complex when the Riekes stepped forward.

Despite the excitement Rieke Park originally generated, almost five years after the land was turned over to the city, no construction had taken place. At this writing, the project remains mired in a disagreement over how to fund improvements. Some Auburn residents want to raise taxes to begin construction immediately. Others feel the park should be funded by private donations.

Hopefully the impasse will be resolved so the sound of a ball game and children's chatter soon can be heard in Rieke Park.

* * *

From the time he initiated Auburn's first troop in 1925, Glenn almost continually worked for the Boy Scouts of America. Through this commitment, Glenn's name became connected to the Scout's successful Camp Little Turtle near Pleasant Lake in Steuben County.

In 1967, the BSA's Anthony Wayne Council made plans for a regional camp. The proposal faced imposing obstacles. "Nobody had 1,000 acres to sell you, so we had to talk a lot of different people into relinquishing land for the camp," said Glenn. After difficult negotiations, the council found what they sought: a continuous wooded area featuring three small lakes and a meandering run of Pigeon River.

As the land search was conducted, Glenn served as a member on the finance committee. "We needed to raise about $400,000 to $500,000," said Glenn. "I was given the job of soliciting in DeKalb and Noble counties." Glenn did his fair share. Through efforts he led, $50,000 was raised.

In hindsight, the success of the camp project only glows more brightly. "Today, Camp Little Turtle is one of the best Scout camps in the country," said Glenn proudly.

Through this writing, Glenn made annual treks to the camp for the Anthony Wayne Council's annual meeting. His attendance came out of force of habit: for years he headed the Pokagon District, one of seven districts that make up the council.

Council contains 11 counties

The Boy Scouts of America's Anthony Wayne Council encompasses a geographic area that includes 11 Indiana counties. Those counties are: Adams, Allen, DeKalb, Huntington, Jay, Kosciusko, LaGrange, Noble, Steuben, Wells and Whitley.

Scouting, for Glenn, was a lasting commitment. "The Scout oath and Scout laws are two things that a boy can't help but have affect him the rest of his life!" he said.

* * *

Layden and Eric paid homage to their father through their own lives. In many ways, both boys tried to walk in their father's footsteps.

Layden accumulated an impressive resume during 52 years as a registered Boy Scout. In 1953, he took part in the National BSA Jamboree at Irvine Ranch in California. In 1957, he attended an International BSA Jamboree at Niagara Falls, Canada. He served 35 years on BSA's executive board, including 20 years as vice president of operations. He also served as chairman of the camping committee and the Pokagon District. Layden attained all of scouting's top honors, including Eagle Scout, the Vigil Honor in Order of the Arrow, and a Silver Beaver.

Outside of Scouting, Layden assumed some of the same leadership roles his father once held. He served as president and a member of the executive board for both DeKalb Memorial Hospital and the YMCA of DeKalb County. He served Greenhurst Country Club as president and a member of its board of directors.

At RC, he attained the title of manager of purchasing while serving as secretary of the corporation and sitting on the board of directors (Layden has since left RC to run his own company).

Layden and Suzie have provided Glenn and Thelma with four grandchildren–Steven, Brian, Lara and Lisa. The grandchildren, in turn, have provided seven great-grandchildren-MaKayla and Kaitlyn, Lukas and Bennett, Daniel and Tyler, and Kylie, respectively.

Glenn named Silver Beaver

On Dec. 3, 1963, the Boy Scouts of America presented Glenn with one of the organization's highest honors.

On that evening, Glenn became a Silver Beaver. A plaque commemorating the honor notes the award recognizes "distinguished service to boyhood."

Like his father and brother, Eric became an Eagle Scout. After working summers at RC and fulfilling his military service, he returned to Auburn and the company. At this writing, he alone continued the family business tradition, holding the title of vice president in charge of marketing.

Eric has three daughters from a previous marriage–Jenny, Julie and Penny. Jenny has a son–Skyler–and is expecting another child soon. Marilyn, likewise, has two daughters from a previous marriage–Christian and Jennifer. Each of them have one boy–Alec and Josh–respectively.

Both boys said they knew while growing up that their father was someone special. In small ways they rebelled against his renown. When Auburn High School made it to the regional level of the state basketball tournament in 1955, Indiana State Basketball Hall of Fame announcer Hilliard Gates interviewed Layden, one of the team's star players. Gates knew the Rieke family and set Layden up to do a little bragging by asking, "What does your father do?" Refusing to take the bait, Layden answered, "He works in a factory."

But, try as they might, the boys couldn't escape Glenn's legacy. The boys inherited his love of the outdoors and hunting. They both fell in love with flying and became licensed pilots themselves. They knew their father earned whatever respect he was given. They

Glenn and Thelma, center, pose with Layden and his wife, Suzie, left, and Eric and his wife, Marilyn, in this late 1990s photo.

noticed the nights he slept at the plant when there were problems. Through the challenges of growing up, they experienced his basic fairness, his ability to solve problems, his firm yet gentle leadership.

When they were older, the boys saw for themselves the influence Glenn wielded. Where Irvin and Mahlon came from TW's mold and led through a cantankerous, pessimistic kind of intimidation, their father was different. He remained calm and level. The workers wanted to follow where he led. "He's a tremendous leader of people and projects,' said Eric. Layden was more blunt. "The employees respected him like a god!" he said.

Both boys were early disciples themselves. Growing up in an era of sports heroes and GI Joes, they looked no further than their backyard for someone to admire. "Both Eric and I were like that," Layden said when asked about his father's influence on childhood aspirations. "He was the guy you wanted to grow up to be just like!"

CONCLUSION

Around 1970, Glenn and Irvin traveled back to the Rieke family's Montana homestead. The house had burned down long ago. The sod buildings had sunk back into the earth. On the windswept hill, Warren's empty grave was just a slight depression. The brothers found a few parts from a Mogul tractor and a motorbike frame that had been bought with money made from shearing frozen sheep.

As this is written, 30 years have passed since that visit. Today, archaeologists aside, very few folks would be able to tell any person ever lived on that lonely plot of land. They wouldn't guess at the struggle that took place there.

With so little physical evidence surviving, it's important that the stories of those times are preserved.

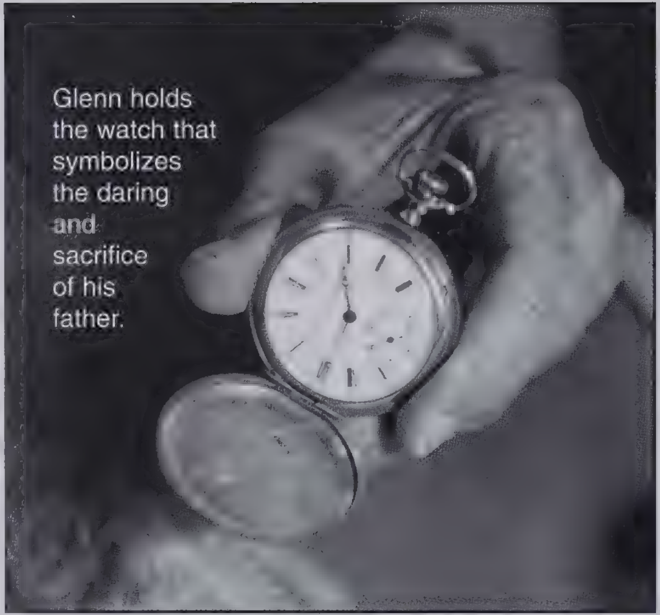
While telling his tales, Glenn took a glass-covered stand off a shelf in his office and removed the watch it displayed. "Mother's picture used to be in the inside cover," he said. "My grandfather give it to my Dad. It's a railroad watch. A real good timekeeper." As a boy, Glenn saw the watch hocked to buy a family meal of bread and ketchup. Eighty one years afterward, the watch passed time as an invaluable keepsake in an office filled with rich memories.

So much had changed!

As he transferred his life story from memory to tape, Glenn frequently pointed to a portrait of his father on the office wall. "Watching my Dad," he said, "I learned what hardship is. He really went through it!"

Not that TW didn't bring his challenges on himself. He could have lived an ordinary mechanic's life. Given the circumstrances of his upbringing, he *should* have lived an ordinary mechanic's life. But something in his nature challenged fate. He was adventurous and ambitious. He wouldn't accept the life he inherited. "Dad had one desire in life," Glenn repeated once more, word for word. "to put his family on Easy Street."

Looking at the life the Rieke family lives today, it's easy to forget the price. In homesteading, TW bet it all. And—when he traded the gold watch for a pawn ticket—lost it all. But he never gave up. "Dad had a motto he instilled on us boys," said Glenn: "'A man worthwhile is the man that can smile when everything goes dead wrong.'" Glenn looked at the portrait. "Every time Dad had the worst times of his life, he had a grin on his face." And sixty years after his father's death, Glenn's voice breaks.


Glenn holds the watch that symbolizes the daring and sacrifice of his father.

Part of his reason in producing this book, said Glenn, was to relay a message to his children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and the Rieke generations to follow. In modern times of measured health, persnickety beauty, myriad self-help, ignored waste, ubiquitous convenience and super specialization, values have changed. Where modern times admire high cheekbones and batting averages, homesteaders like TW valued resourcefulness. Most everything they needed they gathered, grew or made with their own hands.

Dig coal? Eat horse? The concepts sound alien. Today's choices are refined and complicated: quantity, quality, size, color, price, value, brand name, calories, fat content, carbohydrates, overnight or same day. But Montana homesteaders early in the past century lived black and white lives. Choices were few. Don't want to dig coal? Then freeze. Don't want to eat horse? Then go hungry. Yes, the world is now more safe, a better place to live. But in the myriad improvements and technical advancements, something good from that harsh time has been lost.

Glenn struggled to get this point across: the homesteaders had to build from the ground up. No sewer systems, no electricity, no building inspector, no 9-5 jobs, no bridge clubs, no churches, no money and virtually no place to spend it. Homestead children had no day care, no grade or high school, no Little League, no soccer, no swim lessons, no movies, no video arcade, no library, no radio, no television. The infrastructure of modern society had yet to be built. Life was tough. Sometimes you succeeded. More often, you failed. Most of the time, you just took it.

Not many people willingly pursued a challenge such as homesteading. Some who did wilted under the constant strain. But those who took the challenge, learned its harsh lessons, and survived to dream again—they gained something intangible of immeasurable value.

Glenn pointed to another keepsake on the wall—a pair of calipers mounted on a plaque. The inscription reads: *To Irvin and Glenn: I just happened to run across this pair of calipers that belonged to your father and I thought that you might like to have them. Sincerely, A.H. Hardy.* "Hardy was the head of our machine shop, the first man hired in Auburn," Glenn explained. "This is a pair of homemade calipers. Dad made all his own tools since he didn't have money to buy them." The symbolism is clear. Rieke Corporation, that huge international conglomerate, started from nothing. TW built its foundation with his own hands.

Glenn never intended to join the family business. He never planned to have his life intertwine with his father's. If you remember, on graduating from Purdue, he wanted to design and build bridges. But the Great Depression—or perhaps it was fate—intervened. "I didn't have a job and Dad invited me to help him out," said Glenn. "The more I was in the business, the more I became interested in fulfilling his dream." He paused. "Looking back over the years, we done a pretty job of it. I never regretted my decision to join the family business."

In preparing this biography, Glenn both tried to explain his crucial role in the family business and diffuse credit for its success. At one point, out of frustration, he said, "I didn't want to make this story so much about the company, but at the same time, that's my life!"

When he looked over the Rieke Corporation's history, Glenn saw three separate phases, or ages. "There was my Dad's time when they had to do everything with hand tools and junk equipment; that was the Manual Age," he said. "Then the 1940s up through most of the '70s was the Age of Mechanization, when we began using machines to replace much of the manual work. Then, the last 20 or 30 years, the Technology Age has taken over. Computers now run the plant."

TW. and Irvin presided over the Manual Age. They created the company from nothing, built it up with worn out tools, and placed it on its Seventh Street foundation. Computer programmers run the current age. Workers now act as hall monitors, watching the machines to make sure one doesn't step out of line.

Although Glenn won't come out and say it, that leaves a gap of 40 years. During that time, the company grew from a struggling, small-town enterprise into a fiscally muscular international force. The change came through the influence of World War II, mechanization, and expansion.

Certainly, a number of people played supporting roles. Irvin from afar provided input. His inventiveness helped create the machines that ruled the Age of Mechanization. In management, his father-like presence impacted decisions—in other words, he may not have made the decision, but he guided its process.

To lesser degrees, Mahlon contributed as president, as did Don Kelly (Jerry and Ruth's son), who succeeded Mahlon as president in 1980. Other long-time administrators who should be mentioned include Albert M. Bisel, secretary and treasurer from 1925-1978; William K. Schaab, a director and legal counsel from 1930 to 1978; and Bernie Simpson, a director from 1941 to 1966.

But one person rises above the others during the company's mechanical evolution. Over four decades, he guided its operation, implemented its adaptations, expanded its line of products, and nurtured its growth.

Glenn.

To two generations of company workers and the Auburn community, Glenn was "Mr. Rieke."

Although most folks around his hometown will remember Glenn through business, if you've read the preceding chapters, you know that one setting, one backdrop, could not adequately define his life. When it was observed that, due to longevity, variety of interests, high energy and productivity, it somehow seemed as if he and Thelma lived several lives, Glenn chuckled. Then his eyes became deadly serious as he replied, "We didn't just sit on our cans!"

Such busy lives don't leave room for regrets, and Glenn had none. "There is always another trail to follow, another place to visit or things to do," he observed. "But I realize that one cannot do it all. We are on earth for only a short time, so we got to make the most of it."

"At the very least, I think that I've tried."

Besides, that's looking backward. Glenn and Thelma have always looked ahead. They are busy making plans to pass out this book at their 65th wedding anniversary on June 29, 2000.

There's happy times to be had, stories to be told. In their refrigerator, there's still some cherry wine.

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